

THE Round Table

Winter

1986

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

RADICAL CHURCH



"Here's the church, here's the steeple,

open the doors, see all the people."

WHY THIS ISSUE?



What is Church? Is it the Roman Catholic institutional structure, or is it essentially a spiritual principle or truth? Is it all those who profess a faith in Christ, who are reborn in the Spirit, or is it all those who abide in love? What is this gathering of God's people under which we are one body, and what form or forms is it to be known by?

We propose to examine three radical forms of church in this issue. Bill Durland describes resistance church, Srs. Gen Cassani and Rita Schonhoff depict church as community, and Harriette Baggett analyzes women church. In addition, Mary Dutcher, with Witness for Peace in Nicaragua, reflects on Fr. Carney's autobiography. Among the house articles will be found Mary Ann McGivern's impressions of Cuba. Finally, in "Round Table Talk" Ellen Rehlg tells of her life as philosopher and Catholic Worker.

Some may wonder that there is so little of the "institutional" church in this issue. Indeed, the church as institution is a necessity: a means of preserving the movement Jesus left in his wake. As such it is always limited by the circumstances of its time and culture. Perhaps its greatest fault is that it often holds itself exempt from criticism, as if such were a threat to Jesus himself or to the Body of Christ. Yet the Spirit of God does not depend on the institutional church. On the contrary, it is the church which is dependent upon God.

With the Church's faltering at the Synod in Rome this November, the words Dorothy Day quoted return to haunt us: "The Church is the Cross on which Christ was crucified; one could not separate Christ from his Cross, and one must live in a state of permanent dissatisfaction with the Church."

We offer this issue as a contribution to the ongoing pilgrimage of the church. We have chosen to focus on those three forms of church which seem to us most vibrant and most challenging. The Spirit of God breathes where and when this Spirit wills, and that is where we must place our hope.

We at the Catholic Worker continue to explore these pathways to God. As women church we recall that the St. Louis Catholic Worker was founded in 1977 as an avowed feminist venture. We are committed to a nonsexist, inclusive understanding of people, scripture, church, and God. As a resistance church, consonant with Worker tradition, members of our community continue to engage in acts of public witness and holy obedience. These include actions at General Dynamics' headquarters in Clayton, participation in the Pledge of Resistance, and long-term involvement in Witness for Peace (see Fall 1985 issue). Finally, we live out our vocation as community. We labor together, live together, make consensus decisions together, celebrate and grieve together, break bread and worship together.

The call of Jesus is a radical one. We suggest that all Christians are invited to be a church where women can participate as equals; where evil in the form of militarism is resisted; and where genuine community is nurtured. Of course we fail daily. We pray that we all will grow in Spirit toward the one Church which in our tradition encompasses us all, the Mystical Body of Christ.



-Mark Scheu

Original cover drawing

the St. Louis Catholic Worker Community

for *The Round Table*

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THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS: RESISTANCE CHURCH

by William R. Durland

Our family recently arrived at Pendle Hill in Wallingford, Pa., where a Quaker center for study and contemplation has been in existence for over fifty years. It is a type of intentional community where teaching, worship, work, gardening, hospitality and crafts are combined in one setting.

Down the street is the home of the Brandywine Peace Community which describes itself as "A Biblically-based ecumenical Christian peace activist group." For the past seven years it has focused its nonviolent resistance activities on General Electric Corporation, the fourth largest U.S. war contractor, which is producing components for nuclear missiles as well as command and control systems for U.S. nuclear war plans here.

In Philadelphia city the Quaker Concerns Committee of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting supports war tax resisters of this Historic Peace Church. All these are spokes in the wheel of peace, which when thought of in corporate context, are part of a modern confessing or resistance church in action.

As we settle in here as religious peace activist teachers for the academic year, thoughts and hopes for "The Resistance Church" continue to fill me. What does it mean to be a Christian in the nuclear age? What should be the stance of the church in relation to the reigning ideology of militarism? One answer seems clear. It means that Christians are called to be the Resistance Church.

The Scriptures have already spoken over millennia of years on the existence of this church. Matthew 10 - "They will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake....The Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations..."

But our future is clear, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble ... It is (S)he who makes war to cease in all the world; (S)he binds the bow and shatters the spear and burns the shields with fire....I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth..." (Psalm 46). "The nations will be healed." (Rev. 22).

In May of 1934 delegations to the Lutheran, Reformed and United Churches of Germany met in the town of Barman to issue the declaration that became one of the few public denunciations of Nazism to be proclaimed during the twelve year period of the German Third Reich. While Barman did not prevent the Reich government from consolidating its rule, it did confess Christ in the darkest of times and in so doing kept alive the flickering light of the Gospel.

In a press release issued on April 15, 1984 by the Lutheran Peace Fellowship, entitled "A half-century after Barman," marking Passion Sunday as well as tax day, a call to war tax resistance was proclaimed. And in so doing a modern confes-

Bill Durland, lawyer, theologian, and author of six books, recently left the Brimais Community and Catholic Worker Farm in Cokedale, Colorado to be a Scholar In Residence at Pendle Hill, a Quaker study center in Pennsylvania.

sing or resistance church movement was born which found further force and power in a Faith and Resistance Retreat in Glenwood, Iowa in February 1985, sponsored by the Catholic Worker Movement and others. The Lutheran document said "In the light of Barman today we perceive more powerfully the darkness of the night of our nuclear fate finding it also empty of hope and security. We seek the light of hope that those who gathered at Barman sought and to which they witnessed.... Fifty years after those words were first



confessed in Hitler's Germany we hear them addressed in our time." The document calls for a new confession including unequivocal opposition to the production and use of weapons of mass destruction.

The Confessing Church in Germany left much to be desired - too little too late, and too exclusive. It was not ecumenical in the sense that Catholics were not included and Jews were to be only the objects of its "good works" and not co-participants in the movement.

Today we have the opportunity to form a better unity before it is too late: the Resistance Church with the Christian part confessing Christ, and other parts which are not therein centered finding their spiritual and religious core elsewhere, but all gathering in the common call as a religious group to form resistance to the secular terrorists about us.

Sojourners magazine reports that "At a recent gathering of 200 top military leaders at the National War College a revealing statement was made; 'The greatest challenge to all that we do now comes from within the churches.'" The speaker was a high-ranking general who went on to say "A whole new way of thinking is

developing in the churches, and we have to know what to do with it."

In the early 80's the Sanctuary Movement began. The principles of "extended voluntary departure" prevent deportation of refugees to a country judged to be too dangerous for return. Currently this principle legislatively protects Poles, Ethiopians, Afghans, and Ugandans. But the Reagan administration, which has the authority to apply it to Central Americans, has refused to do so.

Members of the Sanctuary Movement, primarily a religious movement, are unable to wait for a shift in U.S. refugee policy. Lives are lost in the interim. Churches have pledged to protect Central Americans who have a reasonable basis for fear of persecution if returned to their homelands. Participation in the movement has created an underground as well as an overground railroad to bring refugees to safety, sheltering them and finding them places to stay indefinitely. The underground is not publicized. The overground has been, with the goal of raising the consciousness of Americans to this need. In the face of severe felony trials and convictions involving our friends such as Stacey Merkt and Jack Elder and others, consciences are awakened. And, in spite of legal retaliation and vengeance, the movement goes on. On July 4, 1982, Irenaeus House Church in Colorado Springs, of which we were then members, declared sanctuary - the twelfth church in the nation to do so at that time.

The real Church has nothing to do with this outer shell of politics and intrigue. The real Church consists of the Mystical Body of Christ in those who grasp the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount and who do not seek to change the world by bullets and ballots, but by changing themselves daily...

- Ammon Hennacy

According to the ACLU, "The federal government has chosen to react to the movement as if it were a drug ring or gangland conspiracy. Two church leaders have been tried and convicted in Texas, others indicted and facing trial momentarily. For the Arizona indictment, the government collected 40,000 pages of secretly taped conversations of church



William Hart McNichols

workers, at Tucson's Southside Presbyterian Church." Agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service posing as concerned Christians attended church meetings with concealed tape recorders.

FBI agents have questioned 100 U.S. travelers to Nicaragua. According to FBI director William Webster "There is a specific foreign counter intelligence reason in each case." Representative Pat Schroeder, Democrat of Colorado, cited a case fully outside the government's surveillance guidelines in which she said that on March 24, 1985, an agent of the Defense Investigation Service had telephoned Sally Brown of her staff asking to question her about individuals who attended a prayer meeting commemorating the 1980 assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero. Two Denver women were asked by an agent for a list of people who attended the vigil and as to whether they knew a certain man or whether they had seen anyone selling newspapers at the vigil. One of the women said, "It made me feel guilty for being at a prayer vigil." "Sending snoops to worship services is appalling," said the executive director of the Colorado Council of Churches.

Church is where you go to preach and pray and praise the Lord. And serve the Lord too.

Robert, age 9

If one examines recently proposed legislation which would make acts of civil disobedience, on their face, acts of terror, the matter becomes more than just appalling, it becomes terrifying! Who are the terrorists? is the real question. Attorney General Edwin Meese has refused to rule out kidnapping by the U.S. government as a means of bringing to "justice" people who commit terrorist acts against the United States. Meese said that, "in general we do not intend to or desire to disobey the laws of any country, including our own." Meese's comments are concerned with hijacking airplanes. But peace people fear that such broad government power would be applied to areas beyond foreign hijacking instances.

Recently Martin Holladay, who chose to disarm symbolically a missile silo in western Missouri, received an eight year sentence for "sabotage" even though his testimony in court stated in effect that he did not intend or desire to disobey the laws of the United States. Martin's



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motives were religious, his acts open, his witness Biblical. He brings to our attention that there are many in jail already, as ministers of the Resistance Church in action, for refusal to register for the draft, for civil disobedience at military bases or before corporate structures involved with military production; persons who have lost their cars, savings, homes as war tax resisters, sanctuary workers - the list is unending.



Ade Bethune

The Resistance Church is not new. It is not a denomination or separate church. It is not organized by us; it is God's work in history. "The nations make much ado, and the kingdoms are shaken; God has spoken and the earth shall melt away." (Psalm 46).

Jeremiah warns us "Do not learn the ways of nations or be terrified by signs in the skies though the nations are fearful of them." (Jer. 10:1-2ff). In an urgent time of impending nuclear holocaust, it is well to reflect on our political-religious tensions and learn again alternatives to the ways of nations, alternatives which will free us from their terror.

Let us return to another time of terror and sanctuary. We may also be called as people and church to witness in the same way:

Even now, all believed that the Cathedral was safe. What men who proclaimed themselves the King's would have the hardihood to violate sanctuary? (Thomas Becket, by Richard Winston, p. 363.)

Becket: "I cannot and ought not to consent to their demands and proposals."

The King's Men: "From whom do you hold your see?"

Becket: "The spiritualities from God and my Lord, the Pope, the temporalities from my Lord, the King."

The King's Men: "So you do not recognize that everything you possess you have received from the King?"

Becket: "Not at all; but I have to render to the King what is the King's and to God what is God's" ...

The knights sprang to their feet waving their arms and gritting their teeth. Thomas had reasserted the principle so long at issue in a tone of scorn and defiance, which up to now he had held in check.... "It is useless for you to threaten me.... If all the swords in England hung over my head, you could not turn me from God's justice and obedience to the Pope. You will find me ready to meet you eye to eye in the Lord's battle." (Thomas Becket, p. 358.)

We must ask ourselves, will this fellow rise again? For "this fellow" is ourselves, our people, our church, our Resistance Church. The sanctuary has already been invaded. The witness must follow!



The Church is a symbol of God's love and God's presence to us, God's people.

- Brother Phil Malone, S.J.

Catholic women in varying degrees view the Catholic Church's understanding of women as a justice issue. Many women have an entirely different view from the one expressed here of the whole situation and do not chafe at the limitations the Church sets on them. This essay is not concerned to judge or comment on those women but to explain the experience and the reasoning of loyal Catholic women who dissent from official Catholic policy and praxis regarding women. Such policy and praxis are not part of the creeds and defined truths of faith but rather the result of the influence of the societies in the midst of which the Church was born and has continued to develop.

of the Church itself. Women-Church is a mystery as deep as the mystery of the love and freedom components contained in the relationship between God and human creatures. It is as deep as the faith by which we are aware darkly that one day the unity of the Whole will be clear to us and we must do today what is appropriate for that day.

It will not do to trivialize the plight of Catholic women by likening these dissidents to heretics of old who went off on doctrinal tangents as the Donatists did on baptism, or Pelageus did on the importance of human work. It will not do to say that Catholic women, awakening as they are to the conflict between the official Church

THE HEALING OF THE CHURCH: WOMEN-CHURCH

by Harriette Lane Baggett

Such is the understanding of those who are in the process of defining themselves as Women-Church. Women-Church is a spirit-filled multitude of women, their numbers unknown, but who find each other in their shared pain and struggle as only those sorrowing in a common oppression are wont to do. Cohesion exists and a loose organization is developing, which remains fluid even in the face of a common determination to prevail in the claiming of basic rights denied to women by the Catholic Church. Feminist theologies, Biblical studies, ethics and rituals of worship are numerous but the relationship to the established Church of those who adhere to them varies greatly. The majority see themselves as Catholics with a vital mission: the reform

view of them and their own awareness of the full implications of their personhood, must toe the Roman line on the subject of their own self-understanding. They must not be simply dismissed from the Church like Father Feeney in the 1950's or Bishop LeFevre in the 70's. Catholic feminists' quarrel with Rome is in an entirely different dimension of reality from the arguments engendered by previous Church deviants which we learn about in Church history.

One exception would appear to be the early difference of opinion recorded in Acts, ch. 10. There we learn of the dispute between the followers of James' view that only Jews could be baptized in Christ and those who stood with Peter

Harriette Lane Baggett, Karen House Community member, has been quietly and unassumingly filling lots of holes in our work lately.

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holding that circumcision and acceptance of the law were not required for one to receive baptism and the word and salvation of Jesus. But Peter yielded to the Holy Spirit teaching him partially through the dream of Cornelius, who by all Vatican standards would be classified today as a lay person. The parallels with today's confrontation between Catholic feminists and the Vatican are striking. However, at the time of the situation recorded in Acts the validity of Jesus' salvific action for all humanity was in question, as well as the capacity of certain classes of people to benefit from Jesus' life and death. The former question clearly is settled today in favor of all humanity. So the crucial element shared by the early Church dispute and today's feminist crisis is the question of the worthiness of a certain class of people to receive fully the freedom of the children of God, won by the life, teachings, and death of Jesus the Christ. Both these disputes reach into the very meaning of individual lives, into the creature-God relationship, in a manner that reveals other doctrinal disputes to be ancillary to the human enterprise of living in grace.



The basic issue for Catholic feminist women is nothing less than the Church's lack of allowing for the full possibility of the life of grace for them. The human life of grace entails the responsibility and right freely to choose to fulfill the intention of our loving Creator in creating us. This is neither a responsibility that humans may shirk nor a right which may be denied them without thwarting God's plan for our life of grace, which necessarily entails the risk of sin. (Karl Rahner, Grace in Freedom, Herder and Herder, 1969, pp. 203ff.)

The traditional Catholic view of women as always being at least on the verge of sin probably accounts for the Church's denial of woman's full right and responsibility to direct her own life. But in this



denial the Church has denied that women are worthy recipients of the full life of grace which is God's plan for all humans. The right and responsibility of freely choosing to accept God's offer of God's self to us, in God's own way, is the essence of human personhood. That is to say, full moral agency is the prerequisite for grace in its fullness.

The most glaring indication that the present Catholic Church hierarchy denies women full moral agency is its denial to women of the possibility of their choosing to accept what many of them perceive to be a clear call from God to a life of priestly ministry. In response to those who will argue that only the church is the channel of vocations to the priesthood, it must be pointed out that there is a source of knowledge within each person which is a more trustworthy guide than any blanket

What the Church has not yet learned is that it must renounce power. That is the only path to spiritual growth.

- Mark Scheu

St. Louis Catholic Worker

rules issued by governing bodies, including the Church. This fact is particularly significant for a class of individuals who are systematically excluded from any input into those rules by the governing body.

The ground swell of feminine awareness in this age springs from that inner source of knowledge in millions of individuals, both men and women. It is an authentic sign of our time in the Vatican II sense. It is a growing "sense of the faithful" and as such is as authentic an inspiration of the Holy Spirit as is tradition and scripture. Indeed, the signs of the times and the sense of the faithful are reliable guides for applying the norms of tradition and scripture to any given age.

But the present pope and magisterium choose to keep their gaze on the signs of times long past. The crucial question is how long will the Vatican powers that be continue to avert their gaze from the Holy Spirit's presence in that inner source of knowledge present in so many individuals today? When will they advert to the signs of these times and begin properly to lead the world in the recognition of the full personhood, the full moral agency, the full potential for grace of women? Women-Church sees no earthly reason to be optimistic about the answers to those questions. So it is proceeding to take care of its own spiritual needs, in its own annex to the Catholic Church and perhaps for some even more peripherally.

Besides the refusal to confer the sacrament of Holy Orders on women, the Church persists in other practices and policies inconsistent with full humanity of women. By insisting on referring to God as male and in refusing to use gender inclusive language in scripture reading, prayers and hymns, the Church is idolizing the human male and ignoring the human female. As blatantly unacceptable as these practices are, they are but symptoms of the insidious lie from which they flow. That lie, as has been shown, holds that women are not fully human. That lie holds that women are not responsible moral agents, bearing the human burden, to accept God's offer freely or to reject it and to own the consequences. In the case of ordination the Church treats women as children and spares them the whole burden of responsible choice even though God created women just as human as men.

The lie of female sub-humanity flourished in the world Jesus was born into. But he repudiated it just as he did the lie of the acceptability to God of hypocrites. Jesus' repudiation of sexism was ignored very early in the beginning of the institutionalization of the hierarchical Church. Perhaps it was dropped in exchange

for acceptance by society at large. But the tangled web woven by the lie about women is the sexist world we live in today.

In the last twenty years hundreds of books and articles have been written trying meticulously to untangle that web. Millions of people have searched their consciences and found evidence of the lie encumbering them. But the Catholic Church remains, in its official statements and policies, a staunch and effective



perpetrator of the lie. Considering the heavy burden this lays on women and also on children in the form of rape, violence of all kinds, poverty and disease, the recalcitrance of the Catholic Church is appalling. The feminization of poverty is no accident. It is rather directly accounted for by the sexism which sees women as less than human, to which certain highly placed and powerful Catholic figures, as well as many Catholics in the news, adamantly cling.

It is not possible to worship God with integrity in a setting which presupposes a lie which you are on to, as does Mass in a church. Knowledge that the lie, symbolized by the church building, vestments, priest and ritual, underlies much of the suffering you come to pray about is a deterrent to purity of worship. But the realization that this lie, if it were true, would deny that you have the capability to worship God, in the only fitting way for humans to



worship, vitiates the setting as an appropriate place for your formal worship. For our formal worship to have integrity it must reflect the worship we give to God with our daily lives. Our lives can be worthy worship of God only when they are lived each day freely, responsibly, with as full use as possible of the creator's endowment of talent for the glory of God and the expansion of God's reign. Such lives would be impossible to women according to the presuppositions of our Church. Because of its untrue assumption of the lack of full moral agency in all women, all women logically are unfit vessels for God's grace. That graced lives are possible to women is the fact which gives the lie to the Church's untrue assumption, an assumption most apparent in its denial of ordination to any woman. That graced lives are possible to women is the fact which renders Mass in a Catholic parish church at least of dubious integrity as a worship event for people aware of this lie. For the devastating self-contradiction deep within the Church, stubbornly held onto, in all innocence by many but idolatrously by some, is all too clearly present.

That so many women, aware of this self-contradiction, are committed to remaining in the Church is a

nothing less than the grace of God. But it might be mere sentimentality and human inertia. To remain a Catholic might even be sinful support of an idolatrous institution. Such are the questions Catholic feminists are faced with. But a committed band of Catholic feminists are making a leap of faith and staying put in the Church. We might call that the ultimate Christian paradox.

But sexism is still pervasive in all the world. Many women of other Christian Churches who are ordained are not permitted by the people of their parishes to exercise full ministry. It is Women-Church's prayer that the Catholic hierarchy will come to acknowledge the full significance of this error. It is Women-Church's leap of faith to trust that in due time the hierarchy will do its part in leading the world out of the darkness of sexism as it has been doing in the case of racism.

Moreover, members of Women-Church are aware deeply that the Catholic Church has nurtured them in the faith and has led them to awareness of the discrepancy between long-held Church assumptions about women and women's capacity for all the grace of spiritual maturity. Full recognition and acceptance of that grace is surely necessary for the full flowering of God's intention for the Church. Love of the Church and concern for its full flowering is a prime motivation for the forming of Women-Church, where it is possible to worship with integrity without repudiating the Church, our natural and supernatural home. For many feel they cannot repudiate their roots, the whole People of God, any more than they can acquiesce with integrity in the present hierarchical denial of their full humanity.

The existence of Women-Church is a miracle, and the future of the Church is dependent on the survival of Women-Church. For Women-Church has hold of a truth which we have from Jesus, succinctly put by St. Paul, but which the "orthodox" tradition has replaced by the lie of exclusive male Godliness. The truth is "there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28) And the truth will win out. For love and truth are one and God is love.



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I

"a question of vocation"

"To live in community is not a question of option but one of vocation. Christianity by nature demands the formation of community...Of course, in terms of specific forms of community, there is nothing revealed. It is the historical moment and the reality that is being lived that indicate the concrete forms of community that the times demand."

Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador
"The Mission of the Church in the Midst
of Crisis in the Country," Fourth
Pastoral Letter, August, 1979

THE HEALING OF THE PEOPLE: COMMUNITY CHURCH

by

Gen Cassani & Rita Schonhoff

II

"in terms of specific forms..."

We are, in many ways, dreamers,
And though we want clarity for ourselves
and for you, the reader,
what we have come up with is, perhaps,
in some ways
an impressionistic rendering
of community as model of the Church.
Stand back a little. Look at the whole.
Maybe something will emerge.
Take what you can, and
Bear with us in our search.

III

- an image -

Once when I was in the choir loft at
the College Church during Easter vigil, I
had the opportunity to look out over the

whole darkened church below. While the
paschal candle was being carried down the
aisle, all I could see was a single,
rather precarious, flame weaving back and
forth, slowly moving forward, slowly
breaking the darkness. As I watched, it
became the source of hundreds of flames on
candles held by the worshipers. The
darkened marble pillars, too, picked up
the flickering lights and reflected them
back.

From a background of years of community
living - in large and small communities,
within institutional and alternative
structures, within a national and interna-
tional context - we keep our eyes on the
Basic Christian Communities of Latin
America as a steady flame of hope, and try
to look ahead.

*Sisters Gen Cassani and Rita Schonhoff, S.S.N.D., both friends of the
Catholic Worker in St. Louis, combined their experiences of community and
Latin America to bring us this reflection.*

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IV

"It is the historical moment"

I was conscious of one of those Emmaus experiences as she spoke. When she finished, we both know it was Jesus we had recognized as she "broke the bread" of her recent experience of Christian community life in a Salvadoran refugee camp in Honduras. Echoes of "end time" reverberated in my mind when she repeatedly used the phrase, "they live on the edge." She emphasized the urgency and energy with which the refugees dealing with their life in exile. She kept referring to their faith and hope, concretely seen in the ways that they have taken hold and organized the life of the camp. They seem to have done this, not in spite of, but because of the fact that they live constantly on the edge. These Salvadorans are living a communitarian form of life, not simply because they have been thrown together in a camp but because they are Christian and know what the vocation to live community means. She was speaking of people formed in basic Christian communities, an ecclesial model that is relational, prophetic, and liberating. The refugees witness to the fact that exile and death are not synonymous. "Exile" is a both/and, death/life reality that opens the way to the future with God. It is at the heart of the formation of a People, redeemed by the cross and graced with the promise of resurrection.

V

"the reality that is lived..."

Reagan called them "concentration camps"; but after several months of helping in one of the new Nicaraguan resettlement camps, I judged it to be what it said it was trying to be: a working cooperative and a Christian community. This is how it came to be and what the people said about themselves:

Late in the afternoon of March 2, 1985, large trucks carrying 134 families from the war zone in northern Nicaragua arrived in El Portillo, Nueva Segovia. These people had been hastily notified to leave their isolated mountain homes in a combat area. They were brought together to begin life as a single community, working in cooperative fashion. The reason: security and mutual protection, fertile farmland for more efficient food production, and

the need to break up Contra support networks. In peace time, a drastic measure; but in war (the reality of life in Nicaragua), it was a necessary move.

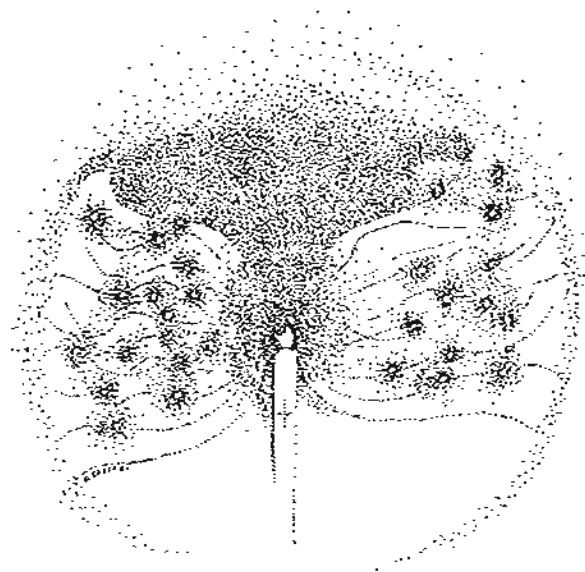
People from basic Christian communities in nearby Jalapa formed a welcome guard for the new-comers as they arrived at a two-story wooden beneficio (coffee-processing building) in the center of a large clearing. This was the nucleus of El

Church is a corporate struggle - a process of becoming whole and human. In the same sense that we are all in a personal, individual struggle to see and find Christ, we are also struggling together to find Christ.

- Donna Henderson

Des Moines Catholic Worker

Portillo. Delegates of the Word from among The displaced persons were joined by other Delegates of the Word from Jalapa. Several priests from the area came, and all joined to celebrate a Eucharist. There was work and food for all at the end of this unexpected journey. More was to come. Families living in the area soon had fires going and food prepared Others from the parish had been assisting during the day, erecting tents at the edge of a large circular clearing. Five tall pine trees



Original drawings for this issue

stood sentinel as the sun moved up the surrounding mountain sides, having blessed this shared ending and beginning.

Some months later, I was listening to several of the young Nicaraguan staff persons trying to explain the nature of these resettlement camps to a visiting group of North Americans. They were asked by the North Americans, "What vision or long-range plans do you have for these resettlement areas?" Their answer: "The development of these areas is a slow process that will take many years because of the aggression." We could probably speak of a medium-range plan, one which slowly brings people to the understanding that "we are a community here." This is not just a cooperative. It is a people whose lives are integrated in many aspects: health, education, work, worship. It is a people working together, producing together, for their own welfare. Communion or unity is the key to their new life here. And they are realizing that this is a new way of thinking and working.

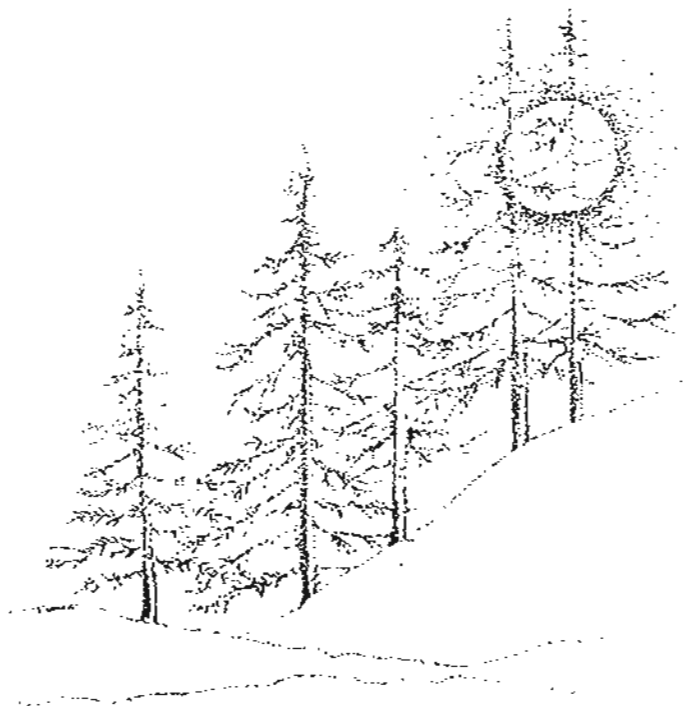
"These resettlement camps are a response to the counterrevolution." Many young Nicaraguans - and old - are trying to infuse the tragedy of the U.S.-backed counterrevolution with Christian hope and mutual care, in the spirit of their revolution, in the spirit of Christ.

VI

"forms of community that the time demand"

Christian community is the combined efforts of individuals to live out a faith conviction. The conviction is this: that we are grounded in Another and bound to each other in ways that mirror the faithfulness of a God who holds us together in love, mercy, and promise, a God who covenants.

What is under attack in many ways and in many parts of the world is something so fundamental that we simply presume it - our humanity itself. The times demand that we no longer presuppose this but that we stand our ground, that we act as the Gospel salt to preserve that which is human: capacity to love and to covenant, responsibility, choice, free response, rational discourse.



The most fundamental of human activities: believing in another, hoping in another, loving another, are the responses most often cancelled out by institutionalized violence, direct violence, and by a consumeristic, commodity-conscious culture.

To stand ground together as a community of believers and followers of Jesus Christ will be to struggle to live lives rooted in the faith that does justice. Personal journeys of faith, articulated and shared, converge into a people united in faith who are willing to work, live, and even die, for justice.

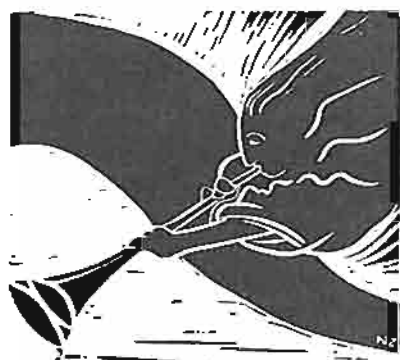
Standing ground together in community keeps alive hope in a despairing world. Our hope is rekindled by the existence of small struggling basic Christian communities all over the world. The very nature of Christianity is communal and calls us to express that interrelatedness by freely entering into covenants of personal relationship as an act of hope.

Critiquing our social reality in the light of the Gospel will put us at odds with the principalities and powers of this world. We will be faced with many choices of nonviolent actions aimed at changing unjust social systems for the poor as a service of love. Love that cannot critique self, society, culture, and church as they interpenetrate each other is a superficial and comfortable love, a luxury no Christian can afford.

VII

"not a question of option
but one of vocation"

Springing up all over the world are communities of faith, dedicated to justice for the poor. As alternative prophetic ways of life, these different communities (Comunidades Eclesiales de Base, Catholic Worker communities, Sojourners, Witness for Peace, Ground Zero) have commonalities but usually emphasize one or another element above others.



Nathan Zohar, O.S.B.

Some elements that we see as important in the formation of these communities are: contemplation, not as a resource of the culture but as an act of resistance to what is not true and good in the culture; simple life style; participatory decision-making; direct contact with the economically poor through hospitality, ministry, personal friendships; social critique using a reflection/action/reflection model; nonviolent acts of resistance growing out of contact with the poor, and out of communal spiritual direction based on the personal prayer and faith-sharing of individual members; celebration of life. What we see as slightly different in a community of this kind is an emphasis on contemplation and communal spiritual direction.

Contemplation is basically SEING - the opening of the inner eye, as the outer eye focuses on the cosmos SEEN in the light of the revelation of God's word. The act of contemplation is fundamental to the vision of the human family as "human persons grounded in Another who initiates personhood and who stays bound to persons in loyal ways for their well-being." (cf. Walter Brueggeman, "Covenanting as Human Vocation," in Interpretations) A God who covenants is the basis for this contemplative vision and therefore the basis for our covenantal relatedness to each other and to this good earth. We come to a

deeper understanding of this God who covenants by: seeing ourselves grounded in each other and in Another; furthering personhood by interrelating in a conscious and responsible way; staying bound to each other in loyal ways for our well-being - giving each other their due - action on behalf of justice.

Contemplation can keep us aware of our human incompleteness, vulnerability, and poverty. It is a way of reaching down to the core of the truth, past all the cultural lies, of seeing ourselves as contingent beings whose true joy and happiness in life comes from knowing our common human connectedness. The call to follow Jesus is undeniably the call to "see what is" and to "work toward what should be."

Communal spiritual direction would be bringing together that which is seen individually and placing it before the community for dialogue and decision-making. In that way, we pray our lives and actions in, through and with the praying lives and actions of others. It broadens the goal of knowing God and knowing myself to the knowing of that God and self as revealed in and through the community.

The biggest struggle is in making the church inclusive.

- Larry Nolte
Artist

Both contemplation and communal spiritual direction can open us out to worlds beyond our own and call us into those worlds as persons wanting to live in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and to confront the powers of darkness as a service of love, as an act of justice. "The Word was the true light that enlightens all; and he was coming into the world." (John 1) In his letters to the Ephesians, St. Paul offers us the word in the form of a mandate: "Put on the whole armor of God...For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers...Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith...and take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

FROM CASS HOUSE



by Mary Fitzgerald

Winter is most definitely upon us here in St. Louis - chilly winds, gray skies - everything but the snow, which won't be long in coming (or so all the kids are hoping!). Though it may be cold and dreary outside, inside Cass House is, as always, a "warm" place to be.

One of the people helping to warm the house with her loving spirit and overly generous heart is Jeanne Dowd. Jeanne has been a soup line volunteer at Cass House for years, but recently decided to become even more involved in the work here. She now comes twice a week to take house, arriving each and every time with smiles, hugs and gifts for our guests, community members and the house. God bless you, Jeanne, for the greatest gift you have given us - yourself!

Others who have given so much of themselves to Cass House in the past have been coming back to visit. Tim Guthridge, a former community member from a few years back, stopped by briefly not long ago. Tim has been at the Holy Family Catholic Worker House in Kansas City and is planning to return to St. Louis in January to join the Vincentian Community. We look forward to seeing him again soon. Our Thanksgiving festivities were considerably brightened by a visit from Janet Gray-McKennis. Janet is enjoying Chicago, especially her job teaching at a Montessori school. She tells us her husband Mike, who was unable to accompany her here, has immersed himself in his studies at the University of Chicago. Hurry back, Janet (Mike too) - we all miss you!

Thanksgiving began for us on Thanksgiving eve with a special liturgy in our chapel. On Thanksgiving morning Zack, Sr. Carol and Jay prepared a bountiful brunch which was thankfully, if rapidly, ingested. Later in the day we shared a traditional turkey dinner with our guests and anyone else who hadn't had their fill of other Thanksgiving feasts that day. Many thanks to all who contributed their time, culinary talent and delectable edibles to our Thanksgiving celebration.



Beyond this one day designated as Thanksgiving we continue to give thanks, for we have been truly blessed with an abundance of good things. Most particularly we are thankful for each other - for the guests we are allowed to serve, for our dedicated volunteers and staff, for all who give and work and pray with us. As much as we have, though, we are always in need. Specifically, at this time, contributions of canned goods, blankets, bedspreads and pillows would be greatly appreciated. Thank you and God bless!



Mary Fitzgerald has recently left the Cass House Community, moving to Houston, Texas. Though sorry to see her go, we wish her well.

Karen House Catholic Worker 314.629.4682 www.karenhousecw.org 1840 Hogan St. St. Louis, MO 63106

I spent eight days in Cuba in November. I came home with stars in my eyes and wrote a euphoric column for this journal which the editors rejected! Pat Coy said, "You have to provide some sources. You were only there eight days. Didn't you find anything wrong there? We all know so little about Cuba it would be unjust to offer our readers unsubstantiated glowing praise."

How many times have I myself discounted reports that the Nicaraguans or Namibians or Vietnamese can do no wrong? I understood what Pat meant. The editors were right.



FROM LITTLE HOUSE by Mary Ann McGivern, S.L.

And yet I did not understand how deep my discouragement had been for years until I saw with my own eyes that people were not begging or living in the streets and heard with my own ears that no one is hungry and jobs and health care and education are available to all. The vision I've held on to tooth and nail is not a pipe dream.

Eight days isn't much time and I could be fooled. But I was with a religious delegation and the persons we met with were Protestant and Catholic pastors, nuns running a home for the elderly, Archbishop of Havana Jaime Ortega, the assistant rector and two professors at the seminary. They all said over and over that everyone's basic human needs are met and that there is no drug trafficking or prostitution.

Rev. Rene David, theology professor at San Carlos Seminary, said, "If the fundamental preoccupation of other Latin American countries is socioeconomic liberation of the people, here in Cuba where that socioeconomic liberation has been largely realized, the fundamental problem for our Church which wants to evangelize is reconciliation of Marxist society and the Church."

He asked us to pray for that church-state dialogue. So did Archbishop Ortega who calls the present a key moment in history for the Cuban church.

Presbyterian minister Adolfo Ham said how humbling it has been for the churches

to be told by the Communists they had failed because they had been on the side of the rich and how the churches had been stiff-necked and unwilling to admit their sin. He said some day the Communists too might need to be taught humility but that is the task of another generation. Our task is to learn humility ourselves.

Did I see anything wrong there? Not in the areas I know best - responsibility to the poor, education, and worship. The poor - who are just about everybody because the country is so poor - are housed and fed. The schools are effective. The difficulties of the Church are different than in the U.S. but they didn't seem to me to be

any greater. Cubans are free to worship as they choose in the churches, but not on the street or in the schools.

What made me uneasy was "politically correct" language about Ethiopia, political prisoners, Afghanistan, and Cuba's relation with the Soviet Union or the Columbian terrorist group M-19.

On the other hand, I do know something about the international debt crisis and I brought home and have been working my way through the collection of speeches ranging from right to left given at the International Conference on the Debt in Havana this past summer. I think Castro is right that the countries can't pay and default would destroy the banks. I enormously admire the neatness of his solution that the U.S. ought to pick up the tab and pay for it by reductions in military spending. The Wall Street Journal also admires Castro's assessment.

B.J. and Sharon kept the home fires burning. Eligha's whole house at Boy's Hope put our side lot in apple pie order. Roma and her baby were here for Thanksgiving dinner. Paul and Brenda and their babies were over a few days ago. I delivered turkey to Charles' family and he called today. They are all part of my real family, a gift so huge I couldn't find words to give thanks at Mass. They are all poorer than the Cuban poor and their suffering cuts me deeper since I saw that things can be different right now.



Mary Ann McGivern, S.L., has almost recovered from the broken foot she toured Cuba on. Please invite her to give a talk on her experiences there at your home church.

Karen House Catholic Worker 314.821.4082 / www.karenhousecw.org 1840 Hogan St. Louis, MO 63106



FROM KAREN HOUSE

by Patrick G. Coy

Doorways are of great import in our lives. Without them, we remain stranded, unable to leave where we are. We cannot pass into the next room, enter a different building, or begin a new period in our life's sojourn. They mark beginnings and endings, entries and exits from our lives. We greet people in them, wave good-bye from them, carry loved ones across them, place holy water receptacles in them, and hang mistletoe over them. In fact, our earthly existence can perhaps best be understood as a journey, a pilgrimage marked by doors opened and closed as so many grace-filled opportunities to move closer to God.

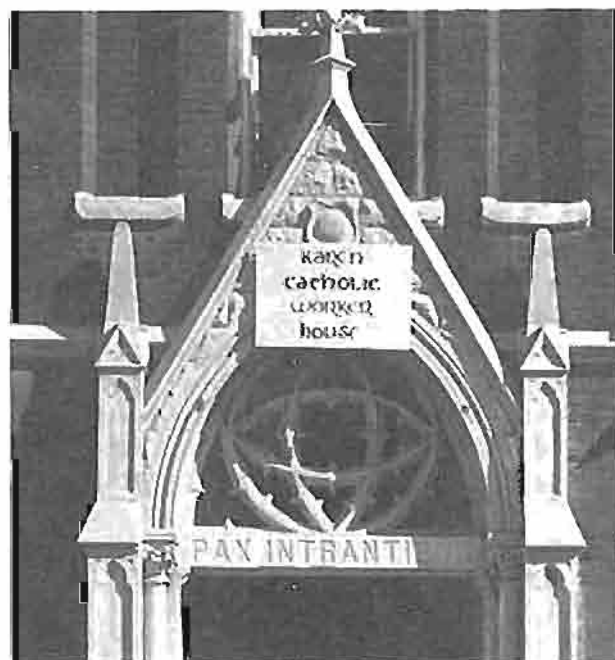
It is not surprising then that doorways are natural collectors of messages both serious and not so. A stroll through the doorways of Karen House reveals something of the spirit of the place. Just what it reveals is up to the reader to decide!

Chiseled into the stone mantle, tall above our heavy double-breasted front doors and just below the stain glass windows, are the Latin words: "Pax Intran-tibus" - Peace to all who enter here. Karen House - named, incidentally, after our first guest - is a recycled parish convent. Like so much else here, the Pax Intran-tibus is a welcome leftover from the original design. (I wonder what all those other abandoned parish convents across the country are being used for? They make great hospitality houses and would be a wonderful way for a parish Renew program to bear fruit.)

The Quiet Room is a sitting and reading room located directly across the hall from our office. Ironically, the Quiet Room door has a gaping hole in it. It was kicked in - a grim remnant of the profound

disquiet which often visits the lives of our guests. Cut out of the economic pie in favor of an annual military budget in excess of 300 billion dollars, hungry and homeless, the guests occasionally lash out at what our co-founder Dorothy Day named as "this filthy, rotten system."

The Office closet door is kept locked. Nevertheless, upon its shelves mysteriously appear most everything no one knew what else to do with! But it also holds the guests' medications. On the door is a cartoon from the "Herman" comic strip. It shows Herman at the doctor, receiving these instructions with his medication: "Take two just before you go to bed, and two just before you wake up." I'm afraid it is an all too fitting comment on our medication distribution system - such as it is.

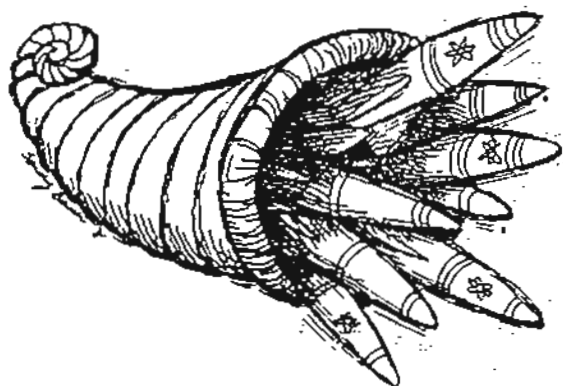


On the door of our Clothing Room is the sign: "Please, please, put donations on the left side of the room so I can get to the window - Harriette." Harriette knows all too well the fate of other Catholic Workers who have passed on from the smell of a room stacked high with mounds of used clothing and shoes (ok, would you believe passed out?).

Pat Coy, Karen House Community Member, can often be found meandering through doorways from room to room at Karen House, with a distant, ruminative expression to his face.

Karen House Catholic Worker 314.621.4052 www.karenhousecw.org 1840 Hogan St. Louis, MO 63106

Over the doorway of the children's playroom someone stuck a sign saying "girls only." It is universally ignored (we house boys up to the age of thirteen). On the back screen door is a much tattered sign: "Please make sure door is locked behind you. Theft Control Department." This sign has taken on new meaning for us as both Joe and Mark have been mugged in our courtyard in recent months and cars have been broken into.



On the Food Storage Room door is a magazine ad for an exterminator. It consists of a photograph of a very dour-faced couple standing in front of their abandoned suburban ranch home. The caption quotes them: "Roaches forced us out of our own home." The same door sprouts another "Herman" cartoon wherein a person-sized mouse walks upright to Herman, who is reading the newspaper. With a sprung mousetrap clinging to its over-sized hand, the mouse thrusts it in Herman's surprised face, saying: "This your idea was it?". But our Food Storage Room does more than house food, roaches, and mice, all of which it does admirably well! (Bet you can't beat this: we recently caught sixteen mice in twenty-eight hours!) It is also a gathering place for Workers, a refuge of sorts, as it is the only first-floor room off limits to guests. Besides, it's a great place to sneak a snack. Until very recently, one could always find Lee sitting here on her stool, busy with food preparation or ready to chat. She just returned from the hospital though, having been seriously ill with a low oxygen count and emphysema. She is back with us now, much improved, but still in need of prayers and support.

Our second floor consists of thirteen rooms which house our guests - eighteen women and five to ten children. Occasionally, signs with some variation on the

theme of "Don't enter without permission" will be tacked on these solid wood doors. These signs come and go, as do our guests whose average length of stay with us is two months. When the chemistry in the house is bad, or when thefts from these lockless bedroom doors become a problem, you can find any number of such signs. At other times, you won't find any. On a deeper level, I think they reflect a basic need our guests have for claiming some space as their own. When people are homeless, with few earthly possessions, with no bread or labor, without family or friends to depend on, the natural need for personal space and a place to call one's own can be accentuated.

The second floor is also home to our linen closet. Its sign reads: "Laundry exchange at 8:30 a.m. every Thursday. Anyone not turning in dirty linen will have to wait till next week." By the grace of God made manifest in St. John Mercy Hospital, both our and Cass House's linens are cleaned weekly at the hospital with no charge. Our thanks run deep.

The third, or attic floor, houses the community. Its doors are surprisingly bereft of signs. However, many of the attic bedrooms have blankets, or tapes, tries for doors, none of which lend themselves well to sign collecting. In fact, Lisa Brandt, a St. Louis University student who recently volunteered her help for a few days, stayed in an attic room with no door at all. None have any heat. But our small simple chapel is heated, and has a door. It is adorned with a drawing of Dorothy Day. Many friends and supporters pass through that door each Tuesday night at 9:00 p.m. for our liturgy. We invite you to join us as well.



The community room refrigerator door is awash with magnets holding news clippings of friends in Central America, ideas for tithes, meeting agenda items, provocative articles, cartoons, etc. All food for thought I suppose.

Tucked away in the cellar, our Tool Room boasts the most elaborate, and perhaps most appropriate sign of all. It is your classic tool and work room, with two work benches, peg boards, and tools in various stages of usefulness strewn most everywhere but where they belong. It is one of my favorite rooms in the house actually. I guess it brings out the Walter Mitty in me. The one who yearns to have the time to be able to be a genuine handyperson, puttering peacefully in the basement workshop. In any event, on the tool room door is a quite large calligraphy poster, matted in blue, with a quote from the French Jesuit, paleontologist and writer Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. The quote says:

"The task before us now,
if we would not perish,
is to shake off
our ancient prejudices
and to build the earth."

It is what we, with the help of you, our readers and loyal supporters, are trying to do here in our work with God's poor and homeless. It is perhaps an ancient, and an endless task, this shaking off of prejudices and building up of the



earth, this "Christifying of humanity" (to use a Teilhardian phrase). But it must be done, and it can be done daily in each of our lives if our gaze is kept fixed on the One whom Teilhard called the Alpha and the Omega Point of the universe - Jesus Christ. For he is the source of the peace we offer so imperfectly to those who grace our lives by crossing over our threshold. Pax Intransigentibus indeed.



LIBERATION AND VIOLENCE: A REVIEW AND COMMENTARY

by Mary Dutcher

Carney, Padre J. To Be a Revolutionary. 1985. Harper & Row.

Five years later and about thirty miles down the road from the small town in northern Nicaragua where Fr. Guadalupe Carney, a native of St. Louis, wrote most of his autobiography, another St. Louisian - myself - eagerly reads it. Virginia Druhe, with Witness for Peace and also from St. Louis, lives in the church house in Limay, where Padre Guadalupe wrote the last few chapters of this book before slipping off to Honduras with a guerilla group. Shortly thereafter, he disappeared.

It seems most probable that he was tortured and killed by Honduran military forces, perhaps in the presence of U.S. military advisors.

I think it is a great grace that this book was written and published. It is no small feat to bring together worlds as disparate and far away as "SLUH" and FSLN (the Sandanistas in Nicaragua) in a progression of coherent development. Finding "SLUH" for St. Louis University High School in the glossary tucked among the list of acronyms for various Central American political, revolutionary, and Church, groups gave a nice homey feeling.

Mary Dutcher, a member of the permanent team for Witness for Peace in Nicaragua, as well as of Karen House, is back in Nicaragua after having graced us with a lengthy visit. Teka recently visited her there, and says "She is fearless the way she drives the washed out mountain roads."

The book has a large scope and Padre Guadalupe's evolution takes a lot of explaining - in fact, it runs almost five hundred pages - but the result is a careful, coherent description of the process by which he became a revolutionary.

The first step in the metamorphosis, as he calls it, was the recognition of the unjust social structure that kept the masses of Honduran campesinos (peasants) in abject poverty: "the capitalist system of private ownership of basic tools of production, of individualism and competition to acquire personal gain, promotes selfishness. It is exactly the opposite of 'loving your neighbor as yourself' and the example of the first disciples..." In this primary stage, Guadalupe proposed the ideology of "the third way", neither capitalist nor communist, in which the worker-campesino class would gain power and radically change the capitalist system using nonviolent methods. This is the ideology of the social doctrine of the Church and of the Medellin documents.



With the bloody, U.S.-directed coup against Allende's democratically elected government in Chile in 1973, Padre Guadalupe became "convinced that there was only one way for a dependent country to make a real revolution...by an armed revolution, by a popular war." He still had some doubts about how to reconcile this realization with Christianity, especially after having been a Gandhian-based pacifist for two decades. So it took a two year process of thought and reflection, until 1975, before his ideas on the Christian use of arms became clear. Basically, Carney decided that the only true Christian love for the poor is an efficacious love, a love that helps them

get out of their poverty once and for all, that liberates them." Using a Marxist analysis, Carney concludes that this means a person must enter on the side of the poor in the struggle against exploitation.

As Dorothy Day indicated in her introduction to a book about Camilo Torres, the Columbian priest-guerilla, we must listen with respect to the thoughts and experiences of these sincere and dedicated servants of God, whose convictions arise out of an authentic love of the poor. I am reminded of Gandhi's telling his son that he would rather his son use violence than be cowardly, as well as of the old adage that it is better to do the wrong thing for the right reason than the right thing for the wrong reason.

Indeed, there is a certain arrogance implicit in the very idea of North Americans, removed as we are from the suffering and institutionalized violence of Third World economic and social systems, presuming to preach nonviolence to the victims of that injustice as we continue to enjoy the consumer benefits of that very exploitation. This is especially true in view of the high level of violence that exists in our own society, our possession of nuclear weapons for example. Our charity should begin at home, with the log in our own eye, so to speak. Perhaps after we have been able to lessen our own violence, much of which is directed to the Third World, we would be in a more appropriate place to raise the issue of nonviolence to the people of the Third World.

Bear in mind that the just war theory is still entirely acceptable in Catholic tradition, and the right to resort to armed insurrection when all other options have failed has been upheld by the Latin American bishops.

In reality, Latin Americans are much less enamored of violence than are North Americans, as they live with its reality rather than its televised image. It is only recently - after accumulated experience - that I have come to appreciate their commitment to using nonviolent methods, demonstrated in actual practice by the Nicaraguan government. For instance, in the face of real aggression (three or four Nicaraguans killed per day by U.S. trained and financed Contras) and acute shortages of petroleum, crucially valuable gasoline or diesel that could be used in military vehicles goes instead into the vehicles transporting U.S. over-seers visiting St. Louis, Mo. 63106 in the faith

and hope that the power of the truth will bring peace to their blood-stained land.

Miguel D'Escoto, Maryknoll priest and Foreign Minister of Nicaragua, talks of the power of the cross (the value of suffering love) and once told a group of United States citizens in Nicaragua that they could not hope to change their country's foreign policy if their work was not based on a love for their country. So I find the roots of nonviolence alive and well in Nicaragua.



I have a dream about the use of nonviolence in

Nicaragua...The only true changes grow out of love

and the courage to risk something new.

I have a dream about the use of nonviolence in Nicaragua. My participation in Witness for Peace is a part of that dream. But, like Guadalupe Carney, I have begun to apprehend the thoroughgoing and pervasive system of exploitation and institutionalized violence that oppresses the people of Third World countries; and I can respect his conclusion that armed insurrection is less violent than the continued death and violence wrought day in and day out by that system. Armed defense against the terrorist atrocities committed upon the civilian peasantry in Nicaragua is an even more compelling impetus to the resort to use of arms.

But, perhaps because I am an anarchist at heart and expect systems - any system - to end up succumbing to some degree to the ever present temptation to be oppressive, I remain a pacifist. Trying to replace one system by another by using violence in order to avoid violence seemed to me inherently contradictory, especially when the only true changes I have ever experienced have grown out of love and the courage to risk something new because fear has been defeated by love.

The confusing aspect of Central America is that there is so much love lived out by the revolutionaries. The truly and irresistibly attractive thing about them is their demonstrated willingness to lay down their lives for their brothers and sisters

ters, which is really very close to the nonviolent ideal that we should always be willing to die for the values we profess, though not to kill for them. The revolutionaries that I've met in Nicaragua do not glory in killing or violence. They are poignantly at ease holding children in their arms. And I suspect it is this example of their gentleness and love, when witnessed by Guadalupe Carney, that had as much to do with his reassessment of his pacifism as any intellectual or theological

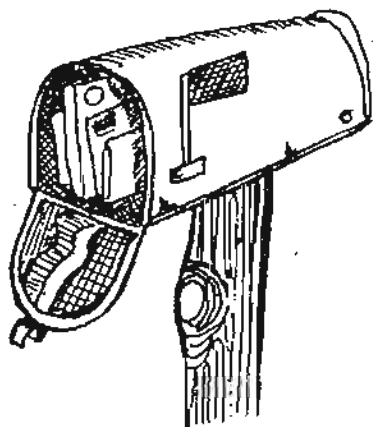
cal system.

So I believe that the changes revolutionaries bring about really stem more from their suffering love than their arms. Also, as a woman, I fear the inescapable connection between military/hierarchical/linear/destructive power and patriarchy. Guadalupe Carney was a Jesuit, a member of a hierarchical, masculine organization within our own dear patriarchal Church, and so was probably not exempt from these influences in shaping his own world view and ethical decisions. The future we need to create is one that is consensual, open to the feminine, and respectful of the earth, inherently opposed to the use of violence.

Paradoxically, one of the primary values of this carefully written autobiography is to make real to the reader the complexities and lack of facile answers to the question of the use of nonviolence in Central America. That increased awareness should in turn help North Americans avoid the temptation to make impulsive and perhaps unconsciously patronizing judgments or unequivocal condemnations of the use of violence by our Central American brothers and sisters, an inherently violent attitude in itself.



(Re-subscribe: send postcard)



FROM OUR MAILBAG

Dear friends,

I just wanted to drop a short note to tell you how much we appreciate your fine work on The Round Table. Gordon's (Zahn) subscription comes to our Center and every time it arrives, the magazine is passed around the office with favorite articles or poetry being pointed out to other members of the staff. Keep up the good work, on your publication as well as your service to St. Louis folks.

I thought you might enjoy a set of our reflection guides to pass around the house on cold Missouri nights....We'd be happy to hear any comments you'd have on them, and hope that you'll share them with your friends...

Blessings and Peace on all your efforts!

Sincerely,

in Christ's peace,
Michael H. Hovey,
Executive Director,
Pax Christi USA

Center on Conscience and War
(Eds. note: Write the Center at Box 726
(5 Bigelow St.) Cambridge, MA 02139)



Dear folks,

Another great issue of RT. Especially appreciated Mary Ann McGivern's article - "From Little House." She put together a lot of the despair I have felt since returning from Nicaragua a year ago - the discouragement because nothing really changes - but it's a shared sorrow and I'll settle for that sharing, and keep on hoping.

Peace, Mary Caritas
C.W. Farm, Sheep Ranch CA

Dear Friends,

Just a note to tell you I thought the "Spiritualities of the Land" issue was excellent except I vehemently disagree with Chris Montesano on some of his points about hospitality on the farm/urban poor versus rural poor etc. I am not new to the Catholic Worker - my parents were very good friends with Dorothy Day....I talked with her often about Peter's vision of the land. She said he always brought urban poor to the farms...ever since I began John Filligar C.W. Farm I have had nothing but urban poor - no one has had farming experience and yet they have done a remarkable job.....

We have a long way to go and perhaps are not as puristic as Chris (someone I greatly admire and know personally) yet in the Catholic Worker there is room for many visions and interpretations of what Peter and Dorothy had in mind in return to the land! I would hope that your readers would understand that while Chris has done a wonderful job and maintains an important witness, his is not the only approach nor the last word in C.W. farming experience. Hospitality must always be a vital part never thought of as an intrusion or burden. There would be no farm here in Alderson if I didn't provide hospitality - our homeless are our only workers, volunteers and community.

Love, Mike Kirwan

John Filligar C.W. Farm,
Alderson, West Virginia

We encourage letters from our readers, and will try and publish as many as possible, reserving, of course, our right to edit them if necessary.

Round Table Talk

by Ellen Rehg

Ever since I began studying philosophy I have been astounded by reactions from people who seem to think that being a philosopher and being a Catholic Worker are about as different as you can get. A philosopher contemplates angels dancing on pins and a Catholic Worker has her nose flat up against the grittiest aspects of humanity, or so it is said. It is exceedingly unfortunate that this separation between philosophy and the "real world" has ever been made. Peter Maurin himself hoped that the Catholic Worker would be a place where scholars would become workers and workers, scholars. Peter was right to see the harmony between study and manual work, since they actually have much in common.

For example, it is about as anachronistic to be a philosopher as it is to be a Catholic Worker. The general population disdains both vocations, understandably, since both are essentially countercultural undertakings. Neither has a high productivity rate nor achieves immediate, tangible results. Philosophers don't peak until their 80's and Catholic Workers never peak, but remain doggedly faithful. Both pursuits are labor-, not capital- or technology-, intensive.

More importantly, in my opinion, both pursuits are crucial in today's world. For me, the view from my back porch provides the perfect image of the connection between being a Catholic Worker and a philosopher. In the early evening, when I sit on my back steps, I see to my right the majestic skyline of downtown St. Louis. The Arch provides the backdrop for the glistening new office towers. It seems to symbolize the soaring hopes of this "rejuvenated" city. Indeed, the skyline at dusk reminds me of a glittering Emerald City unexpectedly towering up from the flatlands of Oz.

To my left, however, much more immediately I am faced with an expanse of weedy vacant lots amid crumbling brick residen-

ces. Dilapidated wooden porches and steps climb up the two-story flats and teeter there, apparently hanging on by a few nails. Boarded up windows mark the abandoned buildings; blanket-draped windows and doors offer evidence of life inside. At night, our neighborhood is dark and quiet; but it is lit by the peach colored glow of the bank buildings, shopping centers, bars and restaurants of downtown St. Louis. Our daily papers claim that the shoppers, bankers, and employees of these establishments are filled with civic pride. St. Louis has "saved" downtown; it can hold up its head again.

PEACE ♦ PEACE ♦ PEACE

I was not born in poverty. But now that I live at the Catholic Worker, I have this view; so rich in its contrast of the deepest contradiction in our society, so concrete in its display of the valued next to the ignored. Confronted with this, the philosopher in me is forced to ask the most basic question: "Why?"

Philosophy is about asking questions, but not just any questions. You have to ask the right ones. This means that your head must be informed by your heart and vice versa.

It is as one-sided to be a Catholic Worker who does not ask the right questions as it is to be a philosopher who does not know what is really important. It was Socrates who rejected all the raging questions of his time that had to do with technique, i.e. "How can I succeed in business and become influential in politics?" or "How can Athens maintain its economic hegemony against Sparta?" etc. His preeminent concern was not about living but living well, and for Socrates this meant that the crucial question was "What does it mean to be human?" This is still the crucial question, for philosophers, and Catholic Workers, for bankers, for shoppers, restaurant-goers and slum dwellers.



Ellen Rehg, Karen House Community member, lives in the abstract when lost in philosophical meditation, or very much in the concrete when tending her daughter, Myrrah.

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THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!

As we begin another year, we wish to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have supported us in the past. The Catholic Worker is a decentralized, personalist movement which depends on many for our continued existence.

We give thanks to our financial contributors, our food donators, those who support us with prayers, and those who help keep our hospitality houses running by volunteering their time. Without you, this work simply would not be able to go on. Thank you for your support.

MILITARY TAX RESISTANCE

The St. Louis Covenant Community of War Tax Resisters is embarking on a three month long campaign to help St. Louisans make connections between military taxes and U.S.-sponsored militarization of Central America (see enclosed flyer).

We will be holding house meetings in February and March in an attempt to increase the number of St. Louisans publicly withholding a small, symbolic portion of their income taxes. Would you like to host a house meeting? Call Pat Coy or Mark Scheu at 621-4052 or 241-5008 for more information.

The Round Table is the quarterly journal of Catholic Worker life and thought in St. Louis. Although subscriptions are free, donations are gladly accepted to help us continue in this work. Please write to The Round Table, 1840 Hogan, St. Louis, MO 63106.

People working on this issue include Clare Bussjaeger, Patrick Coy, Zack Davisson, Ellen Rehg, Mark Scheu, and student volunteers from St. Norbert's College in Des Peres, WI.

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