

Who We Are:

Scott Albrecht (46) Former Chaplain, U.S. Military and Third Order Franciscan, BA,MA in Applied Theology, Faith Based Peace Activist. Scott and his wife Maria have accompanied homeless men and women at various times over the past 17 years. Maria Albrecht (47) IT Manager, Third Order Franciscan; PGCE and a Diploma in Compassionate Ministry from the Diocese of Chicago in the USA. The Albrecht family consists of Scott and Maria and their children, Shoshanah, Christian, Justin and Francis.



The Albrecht Family: Scott (holding Bertie), Justin, Maria and Francis.

What We Do:



The Catholic Worker Farm takes its inspiration from the international Catholic Worker movement founded by Dorothy Day in New York (1930's). The Catholic Worker seeks to live out Catholic social teaching through practicing the Works of Mercy. "For I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me into your house..." The CWF provides full-time accommodation, food, English lessons, counselling and other services for 7 destitute (without access to public funds) female asylum seekers and their children, at no cost.

Most of the women are street homeless and are referred to us by the Red Cross, Jesuit, Notre Dame and Praxis Refugee Services. We have also received women from Advance for Women, The Helen Bamber Trust (for victims of torture) and The Poppy Project (for trafficked women). We live with our guests full time and share common living areas. Our guests are not required to pay for this and we only receive women who are not entitled to government funding, state benefits or to work. We are not salaried or stipended but rely on my wife's income and donations; supplementing our expenses from our personal savings when necessary. We work to maintain a large vegetable garden to help sustain our household.

C.W. FARM NEEDS —

- Financial donations to sustain and increase our work
- Food, especially juice, milk, cheese, butter, cooking oil, sugar and flour.
- Toilet paper, nappies, baby wipes & food
- Help in the garden, cleaning, cooking or DIY
- People to engage in Vigils, participate in "Round Table Discussions"
- Prayer—Without this, all the rest is useless

Roundtable Discussions

Every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm. Call 07983477819 for more details.

Binding the Strongman

A radical study of Mark's Gospel. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm. Call 07983477819 for more details.

JULY 2009



"Love in all Sincerity"

The Catholic Worker Farm

A Community of the London Catholic Worker

Lynsters Farm, Old Uxbridge Road, West Hyde, Hertfordshire, WD3 9XJ
Hm. 01923 777201 Mob. 07983477819 Web Site: www.thecatholicworkerfarm.org

Urgent Appeal!

We need your help now. We only have enough funds to cover next month's rent and are in danger of closing down (July 17th 2009 - as we print this newsletter we took in a lady from Cameroon from the Helen Bamber Trust for Victims of Torture. It's a Friday night and no other accommodation was available).

"I can only trust that this crisis will pass. Just as we believe that God, our Father, has care of us I am sure that some way will be found, either to avert the disaster or for us to continue to care for our sick, old, helpless, hungry and homeless if it happens." Dorothy Day

"EVERY HOME SHOULD HAVE A CHRIST ROOM IN IT AND EVERY PARISH SHOULD HAVE A HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY."

Peter Maurin.

So we do not cease to urge more personal responsibility on the part of those readers who can help in this way. Too often we are afraid of the poor, or the worker. We do not realize that we know him, and Christ through him, in the breaking of the bread"

Dorothy Day

Last week we received a phone call from an MP's secretary. She asked if we had enough room to accommodate a woman from Zimbabwe and her 3 year old daughter who were street homeless. The Zimbabwean's husband had deserted her and left for Poland. Because she was not British she was not entitled to public funds or to work. She was told that if she could not accommodate her child that the little girl may have to go into care. Unfortunately we could not help. We are simply as stretched out as we can bare right now, with 7 guests here. This situation reminds me of the early 90's when Maria and I accommodated 24 homeless men and women in our flat in St. Albans over a one year period. Eventually something happened. Whether it be a movement of the Spirit or simple indignation on our part. We thought, why isn't anyone else offering the poor men and women of St. Albans a bed for the night. I went on the Radio, explained the situation and called for a town meeting. That winter we opened the Open Door Night Shelter. Ironically the Open Door isn't so open. Potential Guests are required to be entitled to Housing Benefit. This would have precluded our Zimbabwean woman and her little girl from being sheltered there.

We at the Catholic Worker Farm beg our readers to consider Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin's request for Houses of Hospitality. If we can help you we will do our best. There is not a day that goes by where we do not get asked to offer accommodation to destitute people. We have housed some of the most caring and kindest people we have ever met. We can suggest someone who is staying here and then that would free us up to take more women off the streets. The women we have received are very responsible and are willing to offer help around the house. If you have a spare room or your Parish is looking to develop a ministry of this kind please contact us.

Scott Albrecht

DALIA'S STORY

My ten-week stay at the Catholic Worker Farm near Rickmansworth, a suburb of London, was a time of transformation and confirmation for me while on pilgrimage. I learned to live Granny's model of hospitality, resistance, and the dignity of work, all based on a foundation of prayer. I shared a lovely old English farmhouse with the Albrecht family and the asylum seekers who stayed with them. Of all the women's journeys of trauma, Dalia's story caught my heart. She is near the age of my oldest child and she left her country, Iraq two days after her 30th birthday. Perhaps my being an American drew me to her; my country, my tax dollars carried out this crime against her and her family.

Dalia is from Baghdad in the neighborhood of Karradi, near Saddam's palace. Because of the fact that her family's home was so close to the palace there was very heavy bombing in the area in 2005. Dalia came alone to London on 24, July 2006 and was picked up at the airport by her sister and brother-in-law who live in London. Her family consists of her parents, a brother and sister. She does not know where her parents are, perhaps in Syria and she cries and trembles when asked about her family. Her brother was kidnapped in Baghdad. She has no idea of what has happened to him. She doesn't know if he and her parents are dead or living.

Dalia finished school at age 22, ten years ago. She worked in a nursery with young children. After that she worked in an office for a company. She and her family belong to the Chaldeans, the earliest Christians and very old inhabitants of Iraq. The Chaldeans are a very significant part of the ancient culture of Iraq, and were free to practice their religion. Since the invasion by the Americans and the removal of Saddam there is now a project going on of total Islamisation of Iraq. The Eastern Christians are the origins of Western Christianity and they are now seriously threatened while the international community is silent. The educated population has fled the country. There is a need for safe haven in the West, and protection for the remaining Chaldeans. There have been killings and kidnappings of priests, deacons, bishops, and the Archbishop of Mosul.

The size of the church that Dalia's family belonged to consisted of 5 to 6,000 members. After the bombings only 50-60 people attended church. Life before the latest invasion was normal with no Americans or invaders. Besides the American bombing planes there are other people like the Maadi Army, or militias who are kidnapping and shooting without restraint. The extremist leaders in Iraq are mostly foreigners. Dalia describes how some people might tell other people about certain families and then bad things were done. These happenings were all rumors as no one knows who is doing what. Dalia wants to go home but it is not safe. The Iraqis are no longer able to shop for food, to walk at night, or go out or they will be shot. Any one going to church or mosque is searched before being allowed in. Even to go to the petrol station one is searched. Everything was getting very expensive and no one could afford to buy anything. There are many days without water, people had to somehow find their own. And electricity was on 2 hours, off 4 hours, or not on at all. There was suffering from the 1992 bombings but not nearly as devastating as with the 2003 invasion.

LITTLE PORTION HERMITAGE



The Hermitage

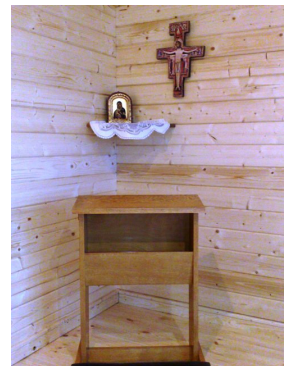
At the heart of our community we recognise the need for prayer.

To this end we have built our Little Portion Hermitage (4x3 metre log cabin).

Hermitage comes from the Greek *eremos* which is the Desert. As we go into the Hermitage we go into the desert of our own hearts. There we battle for what is God's, the old self dies and the new self grows.

We are offering this hermitage for any who would like to come on a retreat. The log cabin has heat, electrics, bed, dresser, desk and chair, it sits 40 metres from the main house in a secluded wooded area over-looking Lynsters lake. Meals, shower and washing facilities are taken in the main community house.

Please contact Scott for more information on +447983477819.



Prayer Stool



Comfortable yet Simple Living



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Organic Vegetable Box



*****FREE DELIVERY*****



HERBS - SPINACH - ITALIAN

PICKING SALAD - FRENCH

BREAKFAST RADISH - NEW ONIONS - RAINBOW

CHARD - FRENCH BEANS - CLIMBING BEANS - COURGETTES - BROCCOLLI -

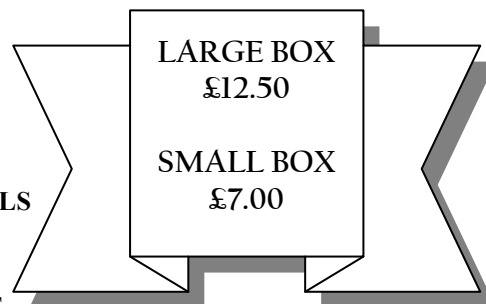
BUTTERHEAD LETTUCE - BUTTERNUT SQUASH - SPRING ONIONS -

CAULIFLOWER - CABBAGE - KOHL RABI - AUBERGINES - PURPLE SPROUTING

BROCCOLI - BRUSSEL SPROUTS - TOMATOES - CUCUMBERS - PEPPERS.

*RED POTATOES *CARROTS - *ONIONS

- ✓ **SEASONAL VEGETABLES**
- ✓ **PICKED DAILY - DELIVERED FRESH TO YOUR DOOR**
- ✓ **ORGANIC – NO HERBICIDES, PESTICIDES OR HARMFUL CHEMICALS**
- ✓ **GROWN LOCALLY - NO FOOD MILES**
- ✓ **HELP TO SUPPORT OUR GOOD CAUSE**



**Base vegetables, grown locally—non organic*



THE CATHOLIC WORKER

Lynsters Farm, Old Uxbridge Rd. West Hyde WD3 9XJ

Mob. 07983 477819 Hm. 01923 777201

JOIN OUR VEG BOX SCHEME - CALL FOR DETAILS:

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

E:MAIL: _____

☐ LARGE VEG BOX WEEKLY £12.50 ☐ SMALL VEG BOX WEEKLY £7.00

OR Contact us at: thecatholicworkefarm@yahoo.co.uk



A car bomb damaged this Chaldean church in west Mosul on Jan. 17, 2008. (Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Valgiusti)

Schools are still going and the children are walked to school by their parents because of the dangers of kidnappings for ransom. The kidnappers are unknown because there are so many militias around now. Families with more money are targeted. At this point in our discussion Dalia could no longer talk; she ended up sobbing in the arms of Beya, our interpreter and housemate.

Every story I heard about the refugee women's lives was so painful; how can we hold such suffering in our hearts, minds, and bodies? And most of the roots of these tragedies can be traced to U.S. and British economic and military dominance in the world. Other ladies seeking refuge at the Catholic Worker Farm came from Tunisia, Congo, Poland, Iran, and Albania. All of them had stories to tell of incredible hardship. When arriving here at their new home they would often take weeks to recover, lying in bed and crying. The women are referred to Scott and Maria from a variety of agencies in London. The CW is sometimes called a "housing provider" but it is much more than that. Charity at the hands of the state or big organizations is a very different experience than what the Catholic Worker family creates. What helps to facilitate the healing from trauma is to become part of the household community, to share daily life and to deal with a variety of life's issues with support. When presented with the legal system or state run programs, the women are often left with a sense of isolation and depression, or they have fallen through all the safety nets. What they need is compassion and solidarity from others. And for those of us who come to serve the poor, we learn how to sacrifice for others, to share of ourselves, to struggle with our own internal imperialist urges.

My time spent working with the Albrecht family and living with the destitute women was a rich and joyful experience. And despite Dalia's despair over what has happened to her family and country, she is able to regain her footing and look ahead to making a new life for herself. The Catholic Worker mission of providing unconditional love and hospitality is such a profound act. To see the human need and to respond to it in an immediate and concrete way, that is what makes us more human. I am reminded of a reading from Luke where Christ's ministers should see to their charge as stated in chapter 12, verse 56. "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" Once again it is with love and gratitude that I see what Dorothy and Peter set before us to follow.

Martha Hennessy

“Love in all Sincerity”

The Catholic Worker Farm

Lynsters Farm, Old Uxbridge Road, West Hyde, Hertfordshire, WD3 9XJ
Home 01923 777201 Mobile 07983477819

MONTHLY STANDING ORDER FORM FOR A COMMITTED GIVER

Please complete this form and return to:

The Catholic Worker Farm, Lynsters Farm, Old Uxbridge Rd., West Hyde, Herts, WD3 9XJ

Your Bank Information

To the Manager (Your Bank).....

Bank Address (in full)

Your Sort Code

Your Account Number.....

Your Account Name

Your Roll Number (for Building Societies).....

Your Personal Information:

Name.....

Address.....

Town.....

County.....

Post Code.....

Telephone.....Email

Please accept this mandate as my authority to make the following **monthly** payment (Standing Order) of:

£5 _____ (Please Tick Here)

£10 _____ (Please Tick Here)

£20 _____ (Please Tick Here)

Other Amount _____

Total Annual payment £ _____

This is to be paid now and thereafter monthly. This replaces any previous instruction in favour of The Catholic Worker Farm until countermanded by me/us.

Beneficiary: The Catholic Worker Farm

Bank: Lloyds TSB

Address: Lloyds TSB St. Albans (309725)

Account Number: 00727903

Sort Code: 30-97-25

Signed

Date.....

⁴
Alternatively you may send a cheque to the above address –
Make payable to **THE CATHOLIC WORKER FARM**

Giving and Receiving

When catching the train back from London one Friday evening I sat in an over crowded carriage with lots of tired commuters all heading home. We all sat ignoring each other, lost in thought, magazines, books and iPods.

A man got on and after a minute spoke out loud. *“Sorry, to disturb everyone, I know you’re all probably heading home and are tired after working all week etc. and I do hope you all have a good weekend. Unfortunately, I am not looking forward to a good weekend, in fact, I am pretty desperate right now. I am feeling pretty bad and need some help if any one could give me some money or food, any left over sandwiches or drinks. I would be very grateful.”*

I sat up, turned and looked at him. I was surprised to see that I was the only one, everyone else continuing to read or look out the window as though he was not there. I guess that regular commuters get this a lot; beggars on the train. But this was a novelty for me and I was surprised at the courage or desperation it took to plead to a group of strangers. He looked pretty ill too, pasty, sweaty, unwashed and a bit strung out. I gave him a smile, thumbs up and Sainsbury’s bag with half a sandwich, packet of crisps and a drink. He said thanks and got off the train.

When he left I put my headphones back in, stared out the window again and cried. I was not surprised at my reaction – I cry a lot. But I was interested in why. Was I sad about his condition, this poor desperate man? Was I sorrowful about the condition of the citified commuters who comfortably ignore the plight of the poorest among them, seemingly bored by the experience. Or did I cry because I so seldom witness humanity within myself and am grateful to be participating in an act, even one so small, that restores integrity to my life. Do I hear that voice inside me say ‘Yes’ this is the way to live, this is the source of the joy you seek.

I still don’t fully understand why this has so much meaning. Perhaps because we so desperately hold on to what we have, what we feel we need and are so fearful of having things taken from us that the simple act of giving is a huge relief. Like carrying the burden of a lie and then finally admitting the truth.

I don’t know what moves me; is it my brokenness, my Western guilt, my sinfulness and gluttony, contrasting with the beauty of the truth in the moment. How necessary it is that we enact restoration, reparation, the call to the ‘rich man’ to give what he has and follow after Christ. The truth is that nothing belongs to us, all belongs to God, and we are called to share, to give back to the poor what God would give; and how can God give if we keep it all. Do we understand that the only reason ‘they’ are poor is because ‘we’ are rich?

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Luke 3:38

If it is in giving that we receive, then what we receive might be seeing ourselves as God sees us – truly human - and we are profoundly moved.

So, here we are depending upon you once again, to help us care for these ladies, to join with us in supporting their recovery, restoring to them the dignity that they should have, and should never have lost. We cannot continue without you, please contact us if you have the means to help, at the moment we cannot pay the rent beyond next month.

Maria Albrecht

