

is due in two weeks (the nurses concur). I am blamed by Mei Ying for thwarting her well designed plans. We are in the private room for two more hours trying to calm Mei Ying down and attempting to convince her that it would be best to have the baby where she has been given the pre natal care, receiving the after care in a home and environment that is safe and that she is familiar with, and that she would be well supported by everyone here at the farm. The weeping continues. I say that I have to go, I can't take it anymore, the efforts, the trips, support, blame.

I ask Mei Ying to come home. It is a long silent drive. We enter the long path up to the farm house and before I get out of the car Mei Ying says "Thank You". I, in a state of negative grace say, "don't say Thank You and abruptly leave the car to go into the farmhouse, while Mei Ying is exiting the car. I look back and Mei Ying falls to the ground in a heap crying. I am broken, I run back to her and hold her, both of us crying. I tell her that I will drive her into the unknown – Huddersfield (remember, I am originally from Chicago).

The next day we drive for five hours to that great place in the horizon – Huddersfield. Car packed with luggage and baby stuff people had kindly donated. We didn't know what awaited us. We reach our destination. It is a detached, new-build house. We enter. To our surprise two Chinese women with little babies are living there. Chinese things are around the house, Chinese food is being prepared, they all speak Mandarin. Mei Ying and I part ways with a hug, some photos and a Thank You. I weep. It's a long drive home. Two weeks later we receive a phone call from Mei Ying, who is in the hospital and has delivered a baby girl. She is consoled. I am left with a question, did Mei Ying receive a miracle or did we?



Mei Ying in her new home. ➔

VOLUNTEERS

Our greatest need is either for an Intern or a core community member(s) to join us. The Catholic Worker Farm would like to extend an invitation to young people interested in living in community. This internship is open to anyone over the age of 20 who would like to experience living and working within a rural, faith-based community. The responsibilities of volunteers might involve daily chores, taking care of our guests, general maintenance of grounds, round table discussions, prayer vigils and involvement in protests. We would greatly appreciate any donations or help with our work. Please do not hesitate to contact us via the above details, our door is always open! We feel we have the potential to do much more! Please continue to pray for us. Contact us!!

TEACH-IN: Monday 26th May 12-7pm

We are organising a day in which we teach each other. Two passages of scripture will be the focus - from Peter & Paul: Romans 13 & I Peter 2:13ff. This will involve individuals offering to take on specific tasks such as; a reflection, exegesis of a passage, critical commentary and prayer. The day will be an opportunity to understand our relationship with both God and the State and to deepen our commitment to our faith. All are Welcome.

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 (46) 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, Shoshannah, Christian, Justin and Francis.

C.W. FARM NEEDS —

- Financial donations to sustain and increase our work
- Food, especially juice, rice, milk, eggs, cheese. butter, cooking oil
- Shampoo, feminine toiletries, 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

MAY 2008



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.londoncatholicworker.org

E-mail: thecatholicworkerfarm@yahoo.co.uk

Thanks to God and all our supporters we are still here and continuing to provide support and friendship to asylum seekers who are referred to us from various London agencies. To date we have had over 25 women come to stay and have expanded our housing (added one more room) to accommodate two more (totaling 6 guests at a time), at the moment we have a mother and her 1½ year old son staying in the new room. We have decided to dedicate this room to mothers with children as over the past months we have found that the government is not keeping to its regulations to house women with children and there are many such vulnerable people needing help.

We have been pleased to witness some success stories for our guests; the story of Mei Ying is on another page, below are some more examples.

We still have our young man from Sierra Leone, who is doing exceptionally well in his BTEC studies and is responding well to medical treatment. Thankfully, he is in a secure and safe environment as the treatment is painful and makes him very tired. He is also receiving help with his studies both from other guests and us when we have time.

We helped one young woman from the Dem. Rep. of Congo to attend a Congolese church every Sunday. Scott drove and picked her up every week for nine months and we all became good friends with the Pastor and his wife. They have now offered her permanent accommodation with their family and she is happily settled.

An Indian woman who was brought (her parents were paid money) into this country to work as an unpaid servant (slavery under another name). After 2 years of agony (sleeping in broom cupboards and being deprived of food) she ran away and sought assistance with the Passage Day Centre. She stayed with us for 3 months, while here she was able to find work as a cleaner and has now moved into a shared flat with another cleaning woman and is well on her way to financial independence.

We also supported a 6½ month pregnant Polish lady and her 6 year old daughter. This was a difficult situation for all of us (other guests included), she had been trafficked to this country by a former boyfriend and was desperately

trying to find a 'normal life' for herself and her children. The amount of personal suffering both she and her daughter had experienced was devastating and had damaged her abilities to communicate effectively with others, especially men. She stayed with us for 2 months and we were able to get her much needed medical care (her pregnancy being termed 'at risk' because of her homeless status) and her daughter was happily settled in a local school. We struggled to sustain the care and security we wanted to offer them and have learnt a lot about our own inadequacies when faced with such raw trauma. They are now in the hands of a London social services team who will hopefully provide the support they need.

What we have found over the last 10 months is that the 'safety nets' have few layers and many holes. Sadly the Catholic Worker Farm has been the only hope for many who have come here for accommodation. It a tragedy that there are so few resources available for all the vulnerable people (including women and children) who find themselves on the streets of England with nowhere to go. We need more Houses of Hospitality — the need is greater than anyone can imagine. Just this week we have had 4 women waiting in a queue for one bed.

We have dedicated our lives to the hope of our community flourishing and are in need of financial support to continue the success of this House of Hospitality. We receive no stipends from the church, government funds or money from Trusts. Thank you very much for your support if you have given it, and please think about becoming a committed giver if you are able (see insert for details).

CATHOLIC WORKERS GUILTY OF DEFENDING THE INNOCENT

Following a peace protest at Northwood military headquarters near Rickmansworth, three Catholic Workers were found guilty of soaking the main sign base with fake blood. Susan Clarkson, Martin Newell and Scott Albrecht were ordered to pay a total of £315 each in fines and costs today at Watford Magistrates Court. On the morning of December 28th 2007, the three had put red paint, to symbolise the blood of the victims of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, on the name plate by the main gate. They had then knelt down to pray as they were arrested. They were later charged with 'criminal damage' after being detained for 14 hours in Watford Police Station. While they were being held, the Catholic Worker Farmhouse near Rickmansworth was raided by a squad of 10 police looking for evidence.

The three defended themselves by stating that these wars are illegal under international law and immoral, and that they have a legal and moral duty to try to bring them to an end. They said that they believed they had in fact

MEI YINGS MIRACLE

A few months before Christmas we received a phone call from Katherine, a key worker at the Praxis Refugee Services in Tottenham. She had explained she had a woman in front of her that had been sleeping at the Hackney Night Shelter. The night shelter folks themselves had been concerned about Mei Ying as she was 7 months pregnant and couldn't speak English. She was deeply vulnerable and it was inappropriate that she would bed down amongst people who may have worsened her plight. More importantly she was disorientated, depressed and her pregnancy was "at risk" She was sent to Katherine.

It was not long before Mei Ying was picked up at the Rickmansworth train station like the 20 other women we had picked up and accommodated over the past 10 months. We were deeply aware though, of the special gift she brought us. We delighted in helping her. Sometimes comparisons would hit me quite strongly; pregnant and vulnerable Mary the mother of Jesus, an asylum seeker in a foreign land, desperate for a place to lay her head, probably an "at risk" pregnancy.

We were soon indebted to good Chinese women who supported us in supporting her; translating, bringing her DVD's and books in Mandarin. I soon learned the words Shei Shei (Thank You). We were also indebted to Anna a local woman who teaches English at the farm once a week. Denise our key worker and I brought Mei Ying to the Ante-Natal dept. at Watford General Hospital on 3 occasions for check ups. At one of our 5 hour visits we were pulled into a private room by the head nurse and the ward manager and told that because Mei Ying was a failed asylum seeker she was considered a visitor to the UK and therefore had to pay for her care and delivery. I laughed. "Jesus wept", I should have done the same. What a sad *state* we are in when a stateless, penniless person is asked to pay for essential care in our hospitals.

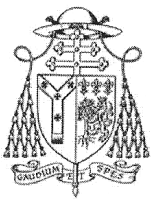
We made sure Mei Ying took her Iron and Folic Acid tablets, but were concerned for her physical and mental health. She wasn't eating properly, she would sleep more than usual and ask to be taken to supermarkets to walk around for the entire day and she would cry allot. She was bored here, unable to communicate effectively and wanting to live amongst other Chinese people. So she applied for a Section Four; which is available for women who cannot travel because of pregnancy. It is an emergency measure leading to government accommodation and can be withdrawn if a person doesn't reapply for asylum or when a woman can travel once again, let's say three months after her baby is born. After all did not Mary bring the infant Jesus to the temple?

We all tried in vain to explain this to Mei Ying. That the accommodation on offer would be substandard, that the government could withdraw their goodwill when the baby is born and she could become homeless again, that the possibility of her being placed with other Chinese people was remote and that she would be sent up north. She insisted. She made regular trips into London to the Refugee Council without appointments; a no no! This combined with her other behaviour led us to believe that she, although lovely, was irrational.

On this note: I think it is often easy to think that some of our guests are irrational. We are learning that generally they are not. It is simply that they have their own system of rational, created by their own culture and history. It is no worse, just different.

At our final Pre-Natal trip, in the hospital waiting room Mei Ying receives a phone call from the section Four accommodation provider in Huddersfield, "Your request for accommodation has been approved". Mei Ying tells me, and of course while she is being seen to, I inform the nurses station that we will no longer be requiring their services and that Mei Ying has been offered accommodation and is moving to Huddersfield – tomorrow. We are once again called into a private room and Mei Ying is told that she cannot travel (mind you, by this time she is due in two weeks).

Mei Ying is Hysterical; I have never seen someone cry so much. She is inconsolable. We call the transport arm of the provider and the gentleman states that he won't transport a woman who



Diocese of Westminster

DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL AFFAIRS

Scott and Maria Albrecht and Community
The Catholic Worker Farm
Old Uxbridge Road
West Hyde
Hertfordshire
WD3 9XJ

March 19 2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am writing this letter of endorsement and encouragement on behalf of the Westminster Diocesan Pastoral Board and its Chairman: Bishop Bernard Longley.

The Catholic Worker Farm, under the supervision and coordination of Mr and Mrs. Scott Albrecht has the approval and support of this Department under our remit which concerns the care of the vulnerable and marginalised and the dignity of the person.

We are extremely grateful to the radical support, pastoral concern and charity that the Catholic Worker Farm is able to offer to some of our most at risk brothers and sisters who would otherwise receive no assistance from other sources in the community. The Catholic Worker Farm is able to offer hospitality to at the most six destitute persons such as victims of sex-trafficking, domestic slavery/ bonded workers and others in desperate need. English lessons are offered to the guests if required and each resident is accompanied through a tailored pastoral care programme including legal aid advice and letter-writing. The most important aspect of this type of care is the pastoral hospitality where each resident is offered a safe haven of friendship, food, accommodation, Christian love and prayer. In the last 8 months the Farm has assisted over 20 destitute women all of whom were neither in any form of employment nor entitled to any statutory benefit.

In addition to the Diocese looking in to sources of funding to help this apostolate, we would ask that you look favourably upon the needs of the work both financially (if you are able to from parish resources) and materially (by way of food etc) to aid this essential ministry.

Yours faithfully,

Edmund P. Adamus
Director

Letter of support for The Catholic Worker Farm from Westminster Diocese Department of Pastoral Affairs and Bishop Bernard Longley.

Please reply to: Department of Pastoral Affairs, Vaughan House, 46 Francis Street, London SW1P 1QN
Tel: 020 7798 9363 Fax: 020 7798 9077 E-mail: edmundadamus@rcdow.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 233699 - Website: www.rcdow.org.uk

improved, not damaged, the sign, by making it a more truthful representation of the nature of activities at the base. The court also heard that they had acted in a peaceful, calm and respectful way, and were friendly with a number of the military personnel at the base who were sympathetic to their cause.

They were accompanied on their act of witness by a number of friends carrying placards with the words "War shall cease all over the Earth... Psalm 46", "We all have blood on our hands", "Northwood HQ, calling the shots in Iraq and Afghanistan from leafy suburbia!", and remembering the dead of all parties in Iraq and Afghanistan, while reading out a list of the names of the dead.

Northwood is the headquarters for British joint forces (air, land and sea, as well as special forces like the SAS) deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as Trident nuclear submarines. The Northwood facility has 2,000 employees and is presently undergoing a major expansion, up-grading and refit to make it ready to work with the new European Defence Force. Its website asserts that "Northwood is very much in the front line" of military operations.

The three made a statement to the police on the day and to the court: "We come here today on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, when the Christian churches commemorate the day when Herod ordered the killing of small children in his attempt to kill the child Jesus, to pray, to remember, to resist and to repent. We pray for all the dead of the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, civilian and military but especially for the innocent. We pray that our hearts may be strengthened with the faith to embrace non-violence as a means of resolving conflicts.

We remember those who have had their lives devastated by war. War does not work; it kills the innocent and destroys our earth. We resist the war making machine of the government of this country by coming to this military headquarters and transforming the signs outside. We use signs and symbols to reveal the bloodshed of war and our hope that the message of non-violence which Jesus gave us in the Gospels, and for which he gave his life, will be for the healing of the nations. We repent for our complicity in the deaths of the innocent by too often allowing our fear to keep us silent. We pray that our hearts may be disarmed and invite our brothers and sisters in the military to allow their hearts to be disarmed also. We encourage them to refuse to fight and kill".



28.12.2007 10:04



"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, Hertfordshire, 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: London Catholic Worker
Bank: Lloyds TSB
Address: Lloyds TSB St. Albans (309725)
Account Number: 00727903
Sort Code: 30-97-25

Signed **Date**.....

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