

## 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.



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

## 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!!

Summer 2008: Guests and Workers.



## 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

OCTOBER 2008



**"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

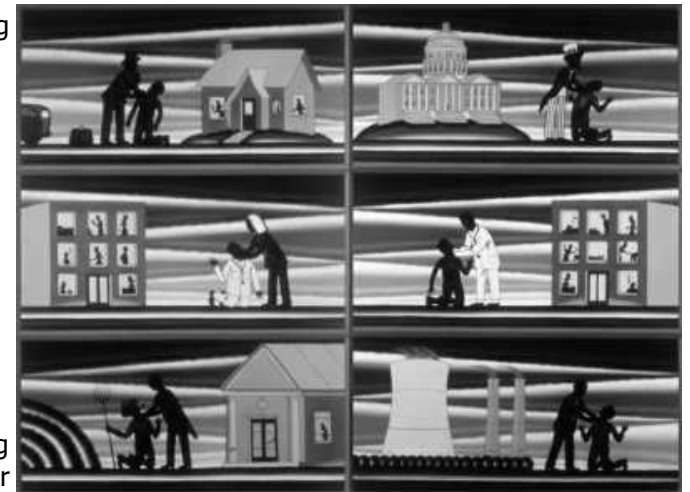
Hm. 01923 777201 Mob. 07983477819 Web Site: [www.londoncatholicworker.org](http://www.londoncatholicworker.org)

E-mail: [thecatholicworkerfarm@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thecatholicworkerfarm@yahoo.co.uk)

## KINGDOMS RISE and KINGDOMS FALL

From an early U2 song  
'October' is the haunting lyric

*October  
And the trees are stripped  
bare  
Of all they wear  
What do I care  
October  
And kingdoms rise  
And kingdoms fall  
But you go on.....and on....*



It's October and a thick fog blankets the Catholic Worker Farm and in time the trees will be stripped bare...  
Empire is in decline.

*"Decline and Fall of the American Empire"*  
Roger Baum

We, White, Western, First World, Men and Women are living in the midst of empire, at its centre, with more power and privilege than 99.9% of humanity have ever experienced during the whole of human history and all across the good earth. The writer of the Book of Revelations deals heartily with how a Christian or any other person of goodwill should live in the midst of empire. He writes to seven churches in Asia Minor which had been subsumed into empire.

The Christians at Ephesus were warned against the love of pleasure and unrestrained indulgence. The Smyrnans were told, "I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. ...the devil will put some of you in prison to test you... Be faithful, even to the point of death". The Christians at Pergamos would have been pressured to offer incense at the altars to the Emperors Trajan, Hadrian, Augustus and "The throne of Satan" (altar to Zeus). The Thyatirans are told, "To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— 'He will rule them with an iron sceptre; he will dash

them to pieces like pottery'. To the Church of Sardis, "Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die" To the Philadelphians, "I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name, you have kept my command to endure patiently" To those at Laodicea, "These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich... So be earnest and repent".

So how do we live in the midst of empire. We get off the fence and radicalise our lives. We wake up and live faithfully. We recognise our complicity in a "Culture of Death" repent of our sins and resist the causes of injustice which we create and benefit from. We acknowledge Christ as Lord rather than earthly rulers, the state or the security that nuclear weapons or military strength claim to promise. We serve others rather than indulge ourselves - we live with those who are destitute and in greater need. We heed the signs of the times and take warning from the world financial crisis and the looming ecological disaster by becoming poor so that others may be enriched. We put away fear and learn to "Love in all Sincerity". We must learn to see evil for what it is and recognise that the "Throne of Satan" is here on earth, not in hell and so we "expose works done in darkness" - Remembering that the arms trade crucifies the poor, Trident nuclear submarines rob our children, and Northwood Military Headquarters calls the shots in Iraq and Afghanistan from leafy suburbia.

The Gospels were written for faith based communities. The book of Revelation was written for not only for 7 churches in the midst of empire, but for all who continue to do so. I believe the best way to do these things is while living in community with the support of our brothers and sisters, husbands and wives. And while the way of Jesus is difficult it is all about discipleship, faithfulness and sacrifice. We must learn to live disciplined lives and be to faithful to the living word which is able to save us. Salvation is not just for the soul. It is for the whole person, family, community, culture and world. May God give us the grace to free ourselves from this filthy rotten system and persevere during the difficult times ahead.

## LITTLE PORTION HERMITAGE

At the heart of our community we recognise the need for prayer. To this end we have just completed building 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.



Lake-front view, 5 metres from the Hermitage



Building the Hermitage: Martha & Scott

## Houses Of Hospitality

1. We need Houses of Hospitality to give to the rich the opportunity to serve the poor.
2. We need Houses of Hospitality to bring the scholars to the workers or the workers to the scholars.
3. We need Houses of Hospitality to bring back to institutions the technique to institution.
4. We need Houses of Hospitality to show what idealism looks like when it is practised.



My experience as an intern at the Catholic Worker Farm this summer has been nothing short of intense: emotionally, physically, relationally and of course spiritually. I have stepped into a community which is characterized by paradox: there is struggle and strife, yet peace and beauty; there is hopelessness in people's situations, yet hopeful people; it is a refuge for the refugee, yet a home which is held captive to the extraordinary cost of living in England. I am not surrounded by people who look like me, who think like me, or even who have been raised like me. In fact, the majority of people around me were born into what the world considers wretched and poor circumstances. I have sat with individuals and have listened to their stories, I have looked into their eyes and heard them say "there is nothing for me." I have cried with them in my arms, cried with my supervisor discussing their situations, and cried in my room alone, asking God "why?"

All of this is a part of the journey of following Christ. I haven't got nearly anything right—I cannot boast of my eagerness to step into this situation, I can only boast in Christ. As Christians we go into situations thinking we are going to be doing all the helping. At the farm, I am the one who has been helped, because God is showing me just how big his family is, how much He loves, and how much He requires of us to give. We have been baptized into a family, a body of believers. Have we ever stopped to consider that this family includes an extraordinary large amount of hungry, hopeless, desperate people? With that in mind, we are called to love each other deeply. What does this mean for you and I today? How much are you willing to give up to follow Christ?

This community, this family, does not do everything right by any means. But the reason I love it is because the leaders of it love God so much that they took all of their wisdom and experience, evaluated, prayed, and decided to give up comfort, security, normalcy for the sake of how they discern Christ bidding them come and die. In the end of Joshua, he urges the people to "yield their hearts" to God and to thereby stop putting other things in front of God in importance. I am left wondering how long I will continue to live like everyone else in the world and if I will truly ever want to answer the question of what it means to die to yourself, take up my cross and follow Christ, because I am too afraid of the answer?



Whitney Roach (middle) with two guests she supported through the summer.

October 12th, 2008

Martha Hennessy

## Arrival At Lynsters CW Farm

When searching for community we sometimes wonder in what direction this path will take us and whom we may meet along the way. I come to this Catholic Worker Farm from Weathersfield, Vermont as a supplicant, and a volunteer to help out for a few weeks. I find myself sharing a 12th century English farmhouse with a very dedicated couple who's family includes two sons and a diverse mix of faces, languages, and spirits. I awake in the morning with a sense of confusion over what has led me here, my own impulse, or the hand of God. Perhaps both. Then I feel a deep sense of gratitude. To my husband who understands my quest, to Scott and Maria for having me, to the beauty of this place where the corner room I stay in overlooks the lake and garden. I am especially grateful to the guests with whom we share this mystery of life.

We attended Mass at Saint Paul's this morning and Father Stan spoke about kinds of prayer. He gave us a vision of standing in the water at dawn, waiting to catch a glimpse of the birds as they rouse to meet the new day. Or simply seeing a donkey standing and waiting. There are so many forms of prayer and we must work hard to both recognize and practice them daily.

And so this old, yet new farm requires much work. Volunteers arrive to help with the building of the "Hermitage", (I think of the Russian Museum with its priceless and countless pieces of art), on the edge of the lake. The lake is a result of quarry mining and the construction of a channel from Birmingham to London to supply coal and iron ore for the city. Apparently the lake is quite deep and inhabited by huge carp that are caught repeatedly by paying fishermen looking for a pleasant country pastime. We are always seeking a return to nature in this modern world of noise, pollution, and loss of the natural habitat. The lake is refuge to many ducks, geese, swans, and herons; they can be seen gliding silently across the water in the morning mist. It is such a blessing to be staying near this body of living water.

Other farm projects include preparing the garden for the winter fallow, completing the poly tunnel (we call them hoop greenhouses in Vermont), to extend the growing season. The greenhouse and very old farmhouse are in need of never ending repairs. Life is always full of tasks that must be done in order to support the community and guests. It is important to remember to pace oneself in this work, to be humble and always pray for strength and guidance.

I can't write about my journey coming here to participate in the Catholic Worker Farm community without considering the context of our current world situation. The global financial markets teeter on the brink of chaos, and the US presidential race nears Election Day. It feels as though those who are aware of what is happening are holding their collective breath while others toil on in pain and oblivion. I completed early voting before leaving the States but I am always left with a feeling of having blood on my hands, trying to be a "responsible" citizen in a so-called democracy. The recent American bailout of the corporate criminals is a theft from the people who need housing, healthcare, and education. The horrific war that has been visited on the Iraqi people has turned on its perpetrators. And now people of faith who mount nonviolent protest to these atrocities are being branded as "terrorists" by the domestic security apparatus. How to maintain faith, hope and love with such dark times ahead? Dorothy and Peter are our guides to help us live a Catholic life, pursuing social justice, sharing with the homeless, and attempting to be more self-sufficient on the land.

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Cont....

We devote ourselves to the practice of the Works of Mercy as our salvation in the face of economic collapse, racial tension, class war, and the loss of meaningful, sustaining work. We see both college graduates and immigrants struggling to find work. The community life has much to offer a diverse group of people.

When I return home I will be participating in the launching of the next action to shut down Guantanamo Bay Military Prison come January in Washington DC. We aim to hold the next administration accountable for closing the prison, ending torture at the hands of the US military and CIA, restoring habeas corpus, maintaining a physical presence at the White House, and educating Congress. This "First 100 Days" campaign will begin with a nine day fast starting January 11th, the seventh anniversary of the opening of Guantanamo as part of the so-called "war on terror". We hope there are people in the European CW community along with others who can find the resources to come for part of this time. It should be quite eventful!

I recall a quote from William Miller who wrote Dorothy's biography. "Having researched the Catholic Worker phenomenon I might very well have concluded, on the basis of the evidence, that the movement was a well intentioned but ineffectual pietistic activism. On the basis of the same evidence I might have also concluded that it was a flight from reality and was thus madness. But I have come to view the Worker movement as expressing an idea that comes truly out of the midst of life and gives to the human spirit its highest due".

In the face of unspeakable suffering experienced by the guests of our Catholic Worker communities, we will continue to pray for the grace to open our minds and act with faith in our efforts with the work of penance and resistance.



Tamar Hennessy and Dorothy Day celebrate the 10th birthday of Becky, the eldest, on April 4th, 1955 in Staten Island, New York. Tamar is pregnant with Martha. Children L-R: Nicholas, Mary, Susie, Maggie, Becky and Eric.

# PEACE

My girlfriend Laura and I first volunteered at the Catholic Worker Farm over a year ago. I was fresh out of university and very eager to leave thought and speculation behind and to commit – in labour, in action – to my beliefs. We were very impressed with our first experience of the farm and we have tried to return regularly ever since.

Some results of our work are hopefully visible around the farm, and Scott and Maria ensure us that they are thankful for our help – but really they are the ones helping us; not only by offering hospitality, but the opportunity to work in faith, and through that work to grow in faith. This is an invaluable gift, and Scott and Maria's rare example at the farm is truly important. We are very grateful.

Weeding, planting, helping to put a roof on the new hermitage, are all fruitful efforts; not merely because of the results, or because they give a sense of accomplishment, but for the way in which they inspire further labour – for the way they teach the importance of peace, of active charity, of sacrifice.

Visiting and working at the Catholic Worker Farm can be truly inspiring; it is a radical and a beautiful place in more ways than one, and I would urge anyone to help with – and to partake of – the life practised there.

Below is a poem I wrote this summer, partly inspired by my stay at the farm. It is a poem about the commitment to a life, not of innocence, but of passion and simplicity; a commitment to the struggle for regeneration – both of the land and of the spirit.

## ADAM

We set foot on brute fields,  
Our backs turned to the apple-tree,

And hands dipped in soil and honey  
Shall soon be marked with blood;

In furrow made by tongue and teeth  
We trace what is to be:

The arced back and bent knee,  
The sweat, hunger, and the cold steel.

Daniel Gustafsson



## Widening the Tent Pegs

As a person who has often followed in Jonah's reluctant footsteps I am finding living at the Catholic Worker farm an empowering, revitalising, exhausting and life changing experience; after 2 years I am coming to understand why I am here.

Last week at church someone said to me 'you must enjoy living at the farm, otherwise why would you do it?' My initial response was 'I am here because I believe everyone should be opening their doors to homeless men & women'. I find God has called me to this life changing experience despite my reluctance and how painful it is to be stretched beyond what I perceive to be my own limitations. I have been told that community can be either empowering or disempowering and I must admit I was worried that I was experiencing the later. Daily prayer has saved me - the strength and affirmation of scripture readings help to keep me open to working with others, flexible to new experiences and gentle in my approach to daily encounters. A wise friend said – when you feel you are drowning don't get out of the water – learn to swim.



Sitting on the roof of our newly built hermitage (Martha Hennessy and I spent two days nailing on felt and shingles) I came to realise that what we were doing here at the farm was a deepening of a life long calling to following Christ; to understand and live his message of sacrifice, to challenge cultural discrimination and follow his example of spending our lives with the poor. I realised that I have spent a lot of time as a Christian avoiding a very simple message; to provide the basic necessities; food, shelter and clothing to the marginalised of society – living the Works of Mercy (Matt. 25) is the very least we should be doing.

Better still; living with the poor enables us to receive as well as to give. Philip Berrigan said, "The poor show us who we are. The prophets show us who we can be. So we hide the poor and kill the prophets." How much have I learnt about myself, and how often have I been provided with the opportunity to examine my motives, look at my privilege and pray through my pain. A life of comfort does not empower change. Being part of the problem (our taxes and governments funding war in their countries) we are challenged to repent - living in community with the poor enables us to work towards restoration. I also take comfort in the fact that life is painful no matter what you do so you may as well spend your time suffering for doing something good!

Going to sleep at night I remember the feeling of satisfaction with all my children safely tucked up in their beds, it is a greater good to 'widen the tent pegs' and thank God that we are also able to provide the same for our 7 guests.

The challenge for us living in the centre of empire is how far are we willing/able to go towards a restoration of our global community. If we agree that it is good to provide shelter for the refugee, can we also acknowledge that our taxes are used to fund wars? We spend £1 billion a year on the war in Iraq, a war that is funded by our taxes and continues to bring refugees to our towns. If we choose to see the connection between housing the refugee and the origins of their plight can we then move to active resistance by refusing to fund this war making? If so, then we face the possibility of prison and the call to offer up, not only a room in our homes but also, our privilege and our freedom.

Maria Albrecht

## LOVE IN ALL SINCERITY

At the Catholic Worker Farm we live with 7 destitute women. Some have been tortured, raped and have lost their loved ones. With us they share their Joys and Sorrows. Life here is "hard but good". We have a rhythm of prayer, work in the garden and in the house, mutual encouragement and Vigiling, dinner and once a week "movie night".

As our readers know our moto is "Love in All Sincerity". This is a phrase from scripture which we seized upon very early as a challenge to us living here. It comes from "Love in all sincerity, loathing evil and clinging to the good. Let love for our brotherhood breed warmth of mutual affection. Give pride of place to one another in esteem." (Rom 12:9,10) We asked the interns what Love in All Sincerity meant to them. Their responses were:

Martha Hennessy: "Love in all Sincerity means you feel like you are at home with your family no matter where you go. The freedom to love without judgement clears the way to finding God's will."

Ceri Owen: "I thought I knew how messed up Britain's asylum system is. I've been on protests about it, I've stood outside detention centres waving placards, I've signed petitions, I'd met a few asylum seekers at church and soup kitchens, I've done my bit for Stop The BNP. I thought I knew. But this is different.

You can't understand how dehumanising a system is until you fully understand the humanity of the people trapped in it. I thought I knew the situation for 'asylum seekers' was bad. When it's a housemate and friend who has to formally prove risk to her life in a language she doesn't speak, without being given even the necessities of life – that's another level of understanding, not just intellectual awareness of injustice but a gut-level fear for a friend's safety.

As a Christian I'm called to love my enemies, and through the places I've lived and worked I've heard quite a bit of racism and BNP sympathisers in the last few years. I've tried to understand their fear, that the places they feel rooted in are changing in ways they can't control, that the community they are a part of is becoming something different. Fear of the stranger is an understandable part of being human. But then I look at the guests at LCWF, and think – what if so much of the public discourse wasn't about 'asylum seekers', but about the toddler with the beautiful brown eyes, or the young woman I shared a silly film with last night? The media bogeyman of the 'asylum seeker' is easy to fear. It's only when you get to know people that they stop being just labels and stereotypes. It's easy to use words like 'asylum seeker' as a political tool, and whether that's to help or to demonise the people so labelled it's still using them as a means to an end.

I thought I cared about asylum seekers. Caring for a person who is far from home and needs somewhere safe to live, an individual with their own name and story and dreams, is different. Sharing a home with 'asylum seekers', working with people rather than for them, is changing the way I think. You can fight for a cause, you can believe in it and give your life to it, but you can't love a cause or an idea. You can only love other people, and you can only grow into that by learning about them and knowing them as a person."



*"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***