Who We Are:
Scott Albrecht, 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 18 years. Maria Albrecht, 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. We currently live with two full-time Interns, Mirjam Johansson (Sweden) and Herman Van Veelen (Netherlands). They bring with them many gifts and skills which are greatly appreciated.

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 accommodation, food, English lessons, counselling and other services for 8 destitute (without access to public funds) female asylum seekers and their children, at no cost.

All of the women are street homeless and are referred to us by Refugee Services. We live with our guests full time and share common living areas.

We are not salaried or stipended but rely on Maria’s income and donations (see Standing Order form on page 8); supplementing our expenses from our personal savings when necessary. We work to maintain a large organic 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 and cleaning supplies.
- Toilet paper & sanitary napkins.
- 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 Scott on 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 Scott on 07983477819 for more details.

FEAR AND TREMBLING (approval has been given for the re-telling of these events)
Last night one of our ladies took what seemed to be too many pills. A few days earlier she had been refused asylum and couldn’t cope with the prospect of being sent back to the DRC. She is a strong woman with deep integrity. The Congo has been at war ever since Belgium left the former colony in 1960.

Over 5.4 million people have died there, making it the largest number of deaths from war since WW2. Women as old as 90 and babies as young as 9 months have been raped there. We sat at the kitchen table frantically trying to figure out how many of which tablets she engulfed. Maria Googled the tablets for bad side effects and recommended dosage, while I extracted information from her and made sure she wasn’t about to fall from her chair for the third time. She is ok now.

OPEN DAY, DINNER & EVENING CONCERT
Saturday September 25th 2010. See page 2 for details
Lynsters Farm, Old Uxbridge Road, West Hyde, Hertfordshire, WD3 9XJ
Hm. 01923 777201 Mob. 07983477819 Web Site: www.thecatholicworkerfarm.org
E-mail: thecatholicworkerfarm@yahoo.co.uk

"…during the Labour party tenure Britain acquired that unenviable status as "leading arms exporter to Africa". As from 2004, Britain’s annual income from selling arms to Africa crossed the £1 billion threshold. Besides being a major arms supplier to such genocide-states as Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Sudan, Britain also sold arms during this period to 10 out of 13 conflict-stricken countries on the continent. These included states in east/central Africa then involved in the so-called Great Lakes War where London in fact sold arms to both sides of the principal protagonists (DRC, Rwanda, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Uganda), which led Charles Onyango-Obbo, the respected Ugandan journalist, to reflect, at the time, that “Britain is supporting both sides [in the war] – it just robs them of any moral authority and a lot of people rightly do despise the British government on this affair.”

Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe

(Continued on page 3)
they say that to most Congolese people who flee to the UK. But I came here in fear of my life and I cannot go back because I know what would happen to me if I do. Now I am hopeful because the Home Office has said they are reconsidering my case.

In the Congo I was a nurse. Here I wanted to take care of children but when I was refused asylum I had to stop studying. I want to work, I am strong. I didn’t come here to live on benefits. For a whole year, since last July, I have been destitute. That means that I am not allowed to work but also I am not allowed to claim benefits and I am not given anywhere to live. What would you do in my situation? I was really desperate. I went to the Red Cross and they sent me to the Catholic Worker Farm in Hertfordshire. I feel as if I have discovered a family here.

It is a farm which is owned by a family and they have 8 asylum seekers living with them. It is a peaceful, beautiful place. Nobody is allowed to eat in their room. We all eat together and cook together. We cook vegetables from the farm. Always the people there want us to be happy and they share everything with us. It is a peaceful place; it is a place that I can rest. It has shown me that in the UK there are people who want to help and can see that we are here because we are in trouble in our country.

If the UK would protect us instead of leaving us on the street we would do what we can to give back to this country. Women Asylum Seekers Together London has recently started a photography project. Some of the photographs are displayed in the hall today. The project is about the way we live, about what home is like for us. Some of the women have taken pictures of being homeless or living in hostels. I have lived like that too and I know how hard it is. But I was lucky that I could take a picture of a peaceful field which is the farm where I live. We want to take these pictures and show them to people so that you can see the reality of our lives.

I hope that you will think about what you would like to do to help, either by giving time or money to a group that helps asylum seekers, like Women Asylum Seekers Together London, or by helping to tell the truth about the people who come to your country to seek refuge.

Counsels of the Gospel

Someone said that The Catholic Worker is taking monasticism out of the monasteries.

The Counsels of the Gospel are for everybody, not only for monks. Franciscans and Jesuits are not monks. Franciscans are Friars, and the world is their monastery. Jesuits are the storm troops of the Catholic Church, and ready to be sent where the Holy Father wishes to send them.

The Counsels of the Gospel are for everybody, and if everybody tried to live up to it we would bring order out of chaos, and Chesterton would not have said that the Christian ideal has been left untried.

Peter Maurin
I come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I am speaking as a member of Women Asylum seekers Together. We are a group of women of all nationalities who came to seek asylum in the UK. Some of us have been tortured; some of us have been raped. Some of us have lost children or husbands or parents. We have all tried to find refuge in the UK. Many of us have been living destitute or have been waiting many years for a decision.

We meet together to help every member to help herself and to try to find a language to express herself. Some of us now have ‘leave to remain’ but we go on working together as we want to support each other.

We have activities – English classes, beginner and advanced, and yoga classes and we meet every month on the second Saturday to share advice and experiences.

For me it has been important to find a group like this because for a long time I felt very alone here. I had problems from my government in my country because I was politically active and I was arrested and put in prison. I cannot speak to you about what happened to me in prison as I still do not want to think about it.

I arrived here in England in March 2005 and applied for asylum. My case was refused and my fresh claim was dismissed. The Home Office say they do not believe what I say and I think

(Continued from page 1)

Tonight I awoke at 4am to make sure that everything was still ok in the house and found another of our ladies in the living room awake. She told me for the tenth time or so about the shooting pains from her head to her teeth and how at night she would feel hands around her throat and a choking sensation, only to awake in terror. She is from Afghanistan and her husband who is here in the UK is attempting to commit an ‘honour killing’ on her because he wanted a second wife and she wouldn’t approve. A few words to describe her would seem in order. Kind and gentle, deeply humble and courteous come to mind, and that is only a start. I am certain she is now asleep as I write this.

Herlinde (centre) helping to clean benches in the garden of the Catholic Worker Farm.

U.S. support for the native Afghan mujahedeen contributed to the radical Islamization of Afghanistan as well as the weakening and near-disintegration of the Afghan state, which ultimately led to the Taliban takeover of most of the country in 1996.

Moreover, U.S. support for the mujahedeen enabled and prolonged their resistance to the Soviet presence, forming the core of what is now referred to as Al Qaeda or "global jihad". (It is estimated that 35,000 foreign Muslims from 43 Islamic countries participated in the war) resulting in thousands of battle-hardened, radicalized, non-Afghan veterans returning to their home. Cooperation established during the 1980s between the mujahedeen and Pakistan's intelligence and military services, as well as the presence of mujahedeen training bases on Pakistani soil, ultimately led to the infiltration of the Pakistani security services by militant Islamic elements as well as the de facto takeover of northwest Pakistan by pro-Taliban rebels.

Critics of U.S. foreign policy consider Operation Cyclone to be substantially responsible for setting in motion the events that led to the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. It is also probable that some Taliban presently fighting the U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan were in fact trained, equipped, or funded by the U.S. or its allies during the 1980s, at which time they were more commonly referred to as "freedom fighters"

George Crile (2003).

The constant refrain from an Iraqi woman who has been with us for over two years, “My country is dead” expresses the hopelessness felt by some; she too may feel dead inside. She is deeply devoted to Jesus and Mary, helps us all of the time and believes in justice.

These are some of the sorrows that our ladies live with on a regular basis. Who bore the blade that has done such deed?

(Continued on page 4)
Many years ago I read Kierkegaard’s Fear and Trembling which poses the ethical dilemma surrounding Abraham’s attempt at sacrificing his son Isaac. Abraham was living on the edge of faith, trusting in God’s providence. According to Kierkegaard the problemata of Abraham’s faithful execution attempt is twofold. In scripture passages YHWH prohibits human sacrifice and... how could Abraham lie to Sarah, Eleazar, and Isaac in order to kill his own son? Who bore the blade that has done such deed? The Father of our faith? Has God or have we suspended the ethical?

Angels have rolled away the stone; the powers and principalities are dazed, confused and cast aside. The more important the issue the less likely writers were willing to use women to testify in the ancient world; unless their experience is true.

When Jesus invites us to a celebration he invites us to one which is full of ecstasy and trauma because of the way that the world is and because of

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 overlooking Lynsters lake. Meals, shower and washing facilities are taken in the main community house.

TREMBLING AND AMAZEMENT

Early morning three women; Mary, Mary, and Salome awake to attend the body of the crucified Jesus. If only we could wash the feet of Jesus one more time. We have brought our perfumes and oils. We long to be present as in the Eucharist at the broken body of the one who gives and loves us completely. But, they were saying to one another, "Who will roll this stone away for us from the door of the tomb?" (Mark 16:3).

“This stone is our final ignominy. Put there by the authorities to certify Jesus' defeat, it serves also to ensure our separation from him. We are not even granted the presence of his corpse to comfort us in our therapeutic ritual of grieving. We cannot weep over his casket and muster brave eulogies. This stone blocking our way terminates, without explanation, our discipleship journey. What an abrupt and bitter closure: a stone we cannot go around and we cannot move.” Ched Myers

LITTLE PORTION HERMITAGE

A great place for you and three or four friends to spend a weekend alone or having a guided retreat. A newly built 4x5m log cabin (sleeps 4-6).

- Social Justice: A Contextual Theology for the First World – A modest proposal for a way in which Christians could be living in the first world.
- We Did Not Invent Community – Community as ontologically root in the Trinity and expressed in a continuum of possibilities within human experience.
- Jesus’ Last Week - A radical day by day exploration of Jesus’ last week.
- Jesus; Priest, Prophet and King – Exploring questions such as – What was Jesus’ response to the ‘Poor of God’ in his culture? How do we live out of our baptism in our culture?
- The Catholic Worker – Catholic Social Teaching - putting “love in action” through the Works of Mercy.
- Faith Based Non-Violent Direct Action - Scott has had multiple arrests & 4 criminal records for love of neighbour. Here he shares his theological reflections on such actions.
- Living with the Poor - Scott, Maria & family live with those who have been denied asylum, bonded, abused and trafficked.
- Christian Anarchism – Exploring Christianarchy; looking afresh at scripture with the possibility that God's ideal is human communities 'without rulers'.
- Christians in Empire – An examination of the claims of Empire and claims of The Kingdom of God upon its citizens.
- Should Christians Fight in Wars? – An exploration of The Early Church Fathers on participation in war-making.
- Other Topics include; Franciscan Spirituality, Repentance and Resistance, The Domination System of First Century Palestine and Jesus the Rebel.
- Contact Scott on 07983477819 for more details.
"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………………………….

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

(Continued from page 4)

the way that we are. Ecstasy and trauma are what those three women experienced as they were running away from the empty tomb in Mark’s gospel. τρόμος tromos - trembling or trauma and ἔκστασις ekstasis – ecstasy, outstanding amazement; the extremes of the discipleship movement. And it lets us know we are alive. To find a balanced life the culture wants us to move to the middle of the seesaw and be balanced and bland. But the other way to find balance is to go to the extreme of the human experience. We ourselves prefer to maintain a middle ground far from the poles of the real human condition. Not too much trauma, not too much ecstasy. But we are called to live in the light of the truth. Do we really want the truth to set us free? Is a question I ask myself.

JOYS AND SORROWS
I remember our Theology lecturer asking the class one day, “Where is our edge?” Is it sadly, the edge of a knife? Can we accompany the three women to a place of execution and despair? Can we listen, remain vigilant (stay awake) and be a prayerful presence during their suffering?

Are we absorbed in our own? Believing that it is what God wants, believing that suffering for sufferings sake will help us grow, and that it is part of God’s plan.

“Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live...” scripture teaches us. “The only suffering that God wants is the one that springs from the struggle against suffering. That’s why Jesus suffered: He was made part of the victims, against abusers of all sorts.”

Jose Maria Castillo

And so we are faced with a choice; to either be the cause of suffering or the cure or at least a midwife in the birth of joy. I consider it one of the greatest joys in my life; to live and share life with an Iraqi on one side an Afghani on the other and Congolese on the other of me. We have had 6 women (out of 60) receive indefinite leave to remain in the UK. I was overwhelmed with joy when I received a call yesterday from one of our former guests, Leila from Iran who has now received asylum in the UK. She is childlike in some of her behaviour and she had suffered greatly.

Jesus invites us to enter into the reality of life (Sobrino). Like the story of Abraham, angels bid us to put down the knife. Let us tend to the wounds of those to whom we have caused much suffering. Lets pray that our joys and sorrows spring from the experience of the passion and resurrection of Jesus as expressed in the lives of others.

Scott Albrecht

“True love is delicate and kind, full of gentle perception and understanding, full of beauty and grace, full of joy unutterable. There should be some flavour of this in all our love for others. We are all one. We are one flesh in the Mystical Body as man and woman are said to be one flesh in marriage. With such a love one would see all things new; we would begin to see people as they really are, as God sees them.”

Dorothy Day
Captialism is Possible

...and longing for that change...
I came here, to the Catholic Worker Farm, the 7th of June. In a few days I'll be gone again. And now I'm going to describe how I have experienced my time here. At first I was so excited about how every day was filled with new, unexpected events and how no day was like the one before. But soon I found the pace of everyday life here too, with routines and habits, even though they were very different from my life back home in Sweden. I would like to write something poignant in all its truth, something that will interrupt but still linger, like the words "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For come after me, like the words "I something that will interrupt but still something poignant in all its truth, home in Sweden. I would like to write were very different from my life back routines and habits, even though they pace of every day was filled with new, unexpected. But soon I found the unexpected events and how no day was every day was filled with new, Afghan), were being treated as the killing of innocent lives (both British and Afghan), were being treated as though we were criminal. The contrast was overwhelming. Maria talked to them as we sang a hymn of peace. When we finished the liturgy with the "Our Father," one of the officers thanked us for leaving. Maria replied, "We aren't leaving because of you. We're merely finished." We walked back to the cars. When we got to where they were parked, a police officer was leaving, having taken all of the license plate numbers. They waited until we had left. In those moments, my thoughts on anarchy became more solidified. Seeing the police act in a way that seemed contrary to "keeping the peace" was in stark contrast to "Officer Smiley" and the friendly images of police I was indoctrinated with at a young age. And the reality is that in many places in the world, the police are worse than what we experienced. Our greatest fears are reality for so many in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Recording History

Maja and I "took a history" today. At the farm we interview each of the ladies and write down their stories so we know their pasts to better help and understand them in the context of our community. I've been living with these ladies for 2 months, piecing together tidbits here and there. But today, hearing a complete narrative in one sitting, I cried for the first time this summer. It's a strange thing, listening for four hours to the details of what sounds like a movie script that's actually reality for the woman sitting across from you. It's difficult to even swallow that these things happen in the world, but I suppose they have to get those film plots from somewhere—they sadly don't materialize out of nothing.

Listening to this woman in the common room on this very cold, very English summer day, I tried imagining what it could possibly be like to walk in her shoes. Impossible as it was, I still caught glimpses of myself as the young woman in the fabric of her story, and I felt fear, loneliness, and exhaustion... tiny moments of empathy and desperation. And when she cried, I cried too. I couldn't help but wonder if I was receiving something from her pain, and I resonated the thought. Even now, writing this post, I feel as though I could be exploiting her suffering. I'm wrestling with that thought. I think we all breathed small, inaudible sighs of relief when we were through taking her history. But it's not over for
her... she's with us now, but when she leaves the library, her story follows her. On this chilly night, I desperately pray that she and the other 387,500 destitute asylum seekers in the UK find some semblance of peace—in a soft bed, a warm meal, a kind stranger (see Matthew 25), and most especially in their worried minds. I've heard Scott mention that in this work he and Maria have prayed for God to stretch the tent pegs of their hearts to make more room to love these women and the other 387,493 impoverished refugees in this country. I think I better understand that prayer after today.

Both Articles by Katy Resop

What the Catholic Worker Believes

The Catholic Worker believes in the gentle personalism of traditional Catholicism.
The Catholic Worker believes in the personal obligation of looking after the needs of our brother.
The Catholic Worker believes in the daily practice of the Works of Mercy.
The Catholic Worker believes in Houses of Hospitality for the immediate relief of those who are in need.
The Catholic Worker believes in the establishment of Farming Communes where each one works according to his ability and gets according to his needs.
The Catholic Worker believes in creating a new society within the shell of the old with the philosophy of the new, which is not a new philosophy but a very old philosophy, a philosophy so old that it looks like new.

Peter Maurin

The Green Revolution

As well as this we garden. Adam's temptation to disobedience as well as Jesus' temptation to "fight or flight" took place in the garden. For us it is a place of deep prayer and contemplation. A time to get in touch with the joys and sorrows of living with the poor. "As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." Matt 14:15-16. And this is what we endeavour to do. We grow Broccoli, Lettuce, Courgettes, Pumpkin, Garlic, Kale, Spinach, Radishes, Peppers, Peas, Butternut Squash, Chard, onions, French & Climbing Beans and Tomatoes.

During the Summer of 2008 we decided to double our vegetable production. To this end we purchased a second-hand Poly tunnel (the Poly tunnel party was great and many thanks to all who helped).

This has enable us to extend the growing season and keep the cabbage white butterfly and pigeons off our plants and hopefully the rats & squirrels too. Often good friends come around and help us to dig more areas for vegetable growing. Our poly tunnel has allowed us to produce tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and aubergines without blight. Yeah!!! During the winter we are growing cabbage, carrots, turnips and radishes. As former city dwellers it has not been easy to manage the vegetable gardening and we thank local experienced folk for their much needed advice - you know who you are!! We ran an organic veg-box scheme in 2009 until we just couldn't keep up with the winter demand. This provided much needed additional income for our large household. In 2010 we have been growing vegetables for our own needs. We also created a berry garden and had to enclose it to keep the rabbits out. Come October we will be planting 4 or 5 more fruit trees. If you're interested in helping, please contact us.