NEWS

We have started several new initiatives since our last newsletter. These include creating The Friends of Mary House; A group from Mill End Baptist Church who will endeavour to meet some of the needs of the Women and Children at Mary House. This might mean helping fill out a form or with homework or driving someone to a GP appointment.

Another initiative is the creation of our Sound Board; This is another group who attempt to hold our community from the outside. There are certain levels of accountability, support and friendship. We have met once and are planning to meet 3-4 times a year.

Still another is that we will be receiving Volunteers for a year at a time from a sending organisation in Dresden Germany. The name of the organisation is Christian Initiative for Europe.

We would also like to Thank those of you who have supported our work in so many ways; prayerfully, helping around the houses, consoling us when it all gets a bit difficult, and financially.

The Catholic Worker Farm t-shirts

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Join the Catholic Worker Farm Facebook Group

The Catholic Worker Farm
Lynsters Farm, Old Uxbridge Road,
West Hyde, Hertfordshire, WD3 9XJ
Hm:01923 777201 Mob:07983477819

A testimony to Gods grace at a time when I felt poor and incapable of acting in justice on behalf of the poor:

So I began my attempt at a radical Lent by shaving my head at 10 minutes to midnight on Shrove (Shave) Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. St. Paul ended a Vow by shaving his head (Acts 18:18ff.) and so I was about to begin my vow by shaving mine. Not an easy task as it was a DIY job and still looks bad.

The next day, Ash Wednesday, I began my 43 day fast. This period without any food was to remind me of the battles of Justice which we face. I thought allot about Israel in the desert, tempted to go back to Egypt. The Israelites said, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have comes from the mouth of God." I was heartened to read Pope Francis’ teaching that Jesus did not argue with Satan but rather, simply spoke Gods Word to him and let the power within the Word do its work.

Events

CW FARM OPEN DAY JULY 5 (Page 7)
CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST CONFERENCE JULY 18–21 (Page 10)
FARM FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL AUGUST 2 (Page 11)
My 43 Day Fast was part of the End Hunger Fast Campaign started by Rev. Keith Hebden, a vicar, a longtime friend and a fellow faster. The aim of the Fast was to highlight food hunger in the UK.

Figures recently released by the Government reveal a surge in the number of malnutrition cases diagnosed at English hospitals since the recession – up from 3,161 in 2008/09 to 5,499 in 2012/13. They also draw attention to reports from the Institute for Fiscal Studies which found a decrease in the number of calories purchased by families, as well as “substitution with unhealthier foods, especially in families with young children”. The Independent

We also wanted to highlight food wastage in the UK. Approximately 15 million tonnes of food is dumped each year. 7.2 million tonnes by individuals, the rest by supermarkets and farmers. It is recommended that the food wasted by supermarkets be given to food banks and that supermarkets not cancel crop growth from farmers.

But most importantly was the rise in those who use food banks. On Wednesday the 16th of April national papers reported the staggering truth that 1 million people in the UK received emergency food parcels in the last year.

We here at The Catholic Worker Farm we grow our own vegetables, go begging, dumpster dive and are donated food by amazing people. We also wanted to highlight food wastage in the UK. Approximately 15 million tonnes of food is dumped each year. 7.2 million tonnes by individuals, the rest by supermarkets and farmers. It is recommended that the food wasted by supermarkets be given to food banks and that supermarkets not cancel crop growth from farmers.

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The third leg in my Lenten journey was to go to The Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg’s office in Sheffield to hand in a letter signed by the most prominent Bishops and NGO’s in the country asking for food justice. I broke bread and my fast in front of Westminster until May 14th when I will be charged with criminal damage and breaking the Serious Organized Crime Act for going into a Military Establishment without permission.

Towards the end of Lent, on the Wednesday of Holy Week, I went to The Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg’s office in Sheffield to hand in a letter signed by the most prominent Bishops and NGO’s in the country asking for food justice. I broke bread and my fast in front of Westminster until May 14th when I will be charged with criminal damage and breaking the Serious Organized Crime Act for going into a Military Establishment without permission.

On Maundy Thursday, we remembered our call to service by washing the feet of those in our community. The foot washing of another during the New Testament period was normally done by a Gentile slave or what wives did for their husbands, children for their parents, and disciples for their teachers (b. Berakot 7b; cf. Barrett 1978:440). This fact adds more significance to Jesus’ statement, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet,

I was then taken to Charring X police station and detained in a cell for the rest of the day. An appropriate place to spend Ash Wednesday. I have been placed on bail and banned from Westminster until May 14th when I will be charged with criminal damage and breaking the Serious Organized Crime Act for going into a Military Establishment without permission.

(Continued... )
LITTLE PORTION 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 overlooking Lynsters lake. Meals, shower and washing facilities are taken in the main community house.

GUEST HOUSE

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

TALKS & WORKSHOPS

- 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 rooted 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.

LENTEN WITNESS

During Lent Fr. Martin Newell OP was imprisoned at HMP Wandsworth for Non-Payment of Fines due to his opposition to the UK’s Trident Nuclear Weapons. He had written “CHOOSE LIFE - NO TRIDENT - SAYS GOD” (above)

On Good Friday Catholic Workers and others from the London area (below) recounted The Stations of the Cross throughout The Geography of Suffering. These places included The Home Office, 10 Downing Street, Arms Dealers and other places which cause suffering.

(...continued) you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you (Jn. 13: 14-15) .....” Jesus takes upon himself the position of a slave and reminds us of humility.

I know I don’t always look joyful, but I felt an overwhelming sense of peace and joy during this past Lenten period. And I am grateful to God for allowing me to participate in a small way in the mystery of redemption.

Scott Albrecht
Reflections on Voluntary Poverty

Recently we have implemented the practice of community dinners at one of our houses of hospitality. These common meals involve each woman cooking for everyone in the house one night a week. This practice was first implemented at the farmhouse years ago, and it was thought that the women who moved into the second, newer house would naturally have community dinners as well, however quite the opposite occurred. The women were buying their own food, cooking their own meals and had their own cupboards. The women at both houses showed great resistance to this change, and this resistance has prompted me to reflect upon the dignity they cared for their four children in addition to eight refugee women, women who had fled their homelands for a better life in the UK. But my experience as an intern on the farm taught me that we always need to stretch our hearts to make room for greater love.

Living with complete strangers in community, I experienced many human challenges—cultural misunderstandings, language barriers, differing ideas about the value of money and time and property. Sometimes I was deeply humbled by the stories and witness of the women. Sometimes I was frustrated by their choices and actions. Sometimes I felt compelled to intervene in their lives. Other times I learned the importance of respecting their human dignity by allowing them to make their own life choices. I lived into “a vocation of being more fully human” (as Margaret Wheatley and Paolo Freire say) in my conversations and interactions with complete strangers, people who had such different stories from my own. I dined, danced, worked, laughed, and cried in solidarity with people otherwise fragmented from my everyday middle class lifestyle. We were a community living authentically human lives under one roof—a family. God’s family.

Families form our first human experience of community. We live and learn about the world and our humanity through our relationships to our family members. We share our space, time, energy, and love with the people around us. We experience tremendous joy and sometimes tremendous pain as we interact with our family; eventually those experiences help us form friendships and, sometimes, families of our own. We make sacrifices of time and money to care for the ones we love.

In Christ we’re called to an even larger community. We live and learn about the world and our humanity through our relationships to our family members. We share our space, time, energy, and love with the people around us. We experience tremendous joy and sometimes tremendous pain as we interact with our family; eventually those experiences help us form friendships and, sometimes, families of our own. We make sacrifices of time and money to care for the ones we love.

In Christ we’re called to an even larger family—God’s family, in which we recognize all people as God’s children. No longer is the title “brother” or “sister” reserved only for someone who shares an ancestor with us; neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies family. Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, founders of the Catholic Worker Movement, call us to love our brothers and sisters through Christ at a personal sacrifice—the same sacrificial love we extend to our family members.

Day and Maurin believed in a radical hospitality extended to the poor, our brothers and sisters in God’s family. They practiced living out the “Acts of Mercy” of Matthew 25: to feed, clothe, and shelter the “least of these.” “Too often we are afraid of the poor, of the worker. We do not realize that we know him, and Christ through him, in the breaking of the bread,” Dorothy said. “Let him who has two coats give to him who has none, and with food likewise.” Unquestioning sharing, unquestioning love.

Our society today has managed the care of the poor by making it the responsibility of homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and state and church-run institutions. Yet we throw away nearly half of our food, live in houses with extra and empty rooms, and own multiple coats for multiple seasons. We’ve distilled ourselves from radical hospitality, creating community, loving our neighbor, and being “fully human.”

“When we succeed in persuading our readers to take the homeless into their homes, having a Christ room in the house as St. Jerome said, then we will be known as Christians because of the way we love one another.”

-Dorothy Day

We must stretch the tent pegs of our hearts and homes and welcome Christ the stranger—the thirsty, the hungry, the naked, the sick, the prisoner, the poor—and face the tremendous joy and pain of conversation and community with our family in Christ. It doesn’t have to be eight refugees; it can be one unemployed man or woman. It can start with a room for Christ. For as Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Katy Resop
AND THEY WILL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS BY OUR LOVE

Let me preface this by saying I have a Christian identity crisis. What does it mean to "be a Christian"? Read the Bible? Go to church? Pray daily? Believe Jesus was the son of God? I hardly ever read the Bible. I no longer go to church. I don’t pray, at least not in the formal "Dear God... Amen" sense. And I don’t know if I believe that Jesus was divine. So uh... what does that make me?

But these Christian identity markers have always felt insignificant to me compared to the wisdom of my favorite camp song: they’ll know we are Christians by our love. Christianity as a set of ethics, a political philosophy, a different way of life—THAT appeals to me.

Christ taught us a creative, radical way to live and to love one another. The Gospels are Jesus’ teachings about a radical new way to live—a way of BOUNDLESS LOVE (shout out to Pine Lake Camp, Summer 2006!). Whether or not “I really do believe that there’s a heaven somewhere” (so much camp love!), whether or not I believe Jesus is my savior, I do believe that our salvation as a human race can be found in "The Way" Jesus pointed us toward (and he’s not the only teacher of such great wisdom).

Sadly, it seems most Christians are no longer interested in living a radically different way. (I know I’m certainly not the first person to think so. I also know there are evangelicals, Catholics, Protestants, and collaborations of these groups who are interested in living out radical love).

I’ve got a lot to unpack here, and maybe I’m trying to “have my cake and eat it too.” Sooooooo much more on this later. I only write this as a preface to the article I wrote for the Waterloo Catholic Worker to be published in their next newsletter. It’s a call to welcome the stranger into our hearts and homes and to be Christians by our love.

Scott and Maria, my mentors at the Catholic Worker Farm in England, said they often prayed for God to “stretch the tent pegs of their hearts” to allow room for more love. God seemed to have stretched their tent as far as take a half-day off during the week. Also, the women living in our houses only have to take part in the weekly meals four days of the week, and are able to cook what they would like and whenever they would like for the other three days. The understanding is that we recognize living in solidarity with one another is difficult work, and to avoid burn out we encourage private space and personal time. Dorothy Day writes, “daily, hourly, to give our own possessions and especially to subordinate our own impulses and wishes to others – these are hard, hard things; and I don’t think they ever get any easier” (Loaves and Fishes, 84).

The voluntary poverty and spirit of detachment that we attempt include materialistic, monetary, spatial, and temporal kinds of poverty. We eat the food that is donated to us, whether it is old or out of date. The only foods we occasionally buy are some dairy products. Often we go to charity shops and car boot sales first (similar to yard sales and flea markets in America) if something needs to be purchased. We try to fix things around the house ourselves instead of calling a specialist or replacing it. To help pay our rent and other expenses, we sell packaged food and bread that has been donated to us and homemade jam and vegetables from our garden on the street in a nearby city every Friday. Our selling is actually asking’ (begging?) for donations because we don’t price anything we sell and we simply tell people to give what they would like to our cause. We send out hundreds of bi-yearly newsletters to let people know what we do, and also to receive donations. Spatially, we are living in solidarity with the women as fellow community members in our houses, and temporally, the Catholic Worker is a full time job that often extends beyond typical working hours. One gives up time with family and friends, as well as one’s independence. Also working collaboratively and discussing before making all decisions with the core community of volunteers is another kind of poverty.

But yet, there are boundaries that are put up, and securities in place. At the farm, the volunteers live upstairs, and the guests downstairs. I don’t let guests in my room, and sometimes if the women ask us for help in the evenings, we tell them that it will have to wait until tomorrow. Right now, each woman has a substantial amount of space, and I’m sure it’s possible that we could allow more women to live in our houses if we minimized the area each person was

Purchase the DVD
“Two Lives for One Cause”
A moving documentary on Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker, and Sr Dorothy Stang, activist in the Amazon Forest. Directed by Tatiana Polastry. £7 Cost including P&P. Contact Scott on 07983477819 for details.

(Continued on page 13)
Dorothy Day writes that though we may attempt poverty, a kind of stripping of ourselves, “still you will reach out like an octopus to seek your own comfort, your untroubled time, your ease, your refreshment” (Loaves and Fishes, 84).

I came across an account of the Baltimore Catholic Worker that closed down due to a court ruling it as a public nuisance. There was poor management and a plague of vermin in this house of hospitality for two hundred people, in which about half slept on the floor. There were only three toilets and no showers, and additionally the first floor windows were continuously broken into. But nonetheless, apparently the corporeal and spiritual works of mercy were always practiced. Dorothy states that “In Baltimore the folly of our work, even the scandal of it, is revealed in all its intensity.”

Paradoxically we attempt voluntary poverty which is “so esteemed by God... something to be sought after, worked for, the pearl of great price” (Selected Writings, 114), knowing that we will continually fail to do it perfectly. All of this is done because of the belief in the connection between poverty and providence, and reliance on the “primacy of the spiritual” which Dorothy stated makes the rest of the work easy. I suppose this is one aspect of the Catholic Worker that makes it radical, as it requires one to be less practical and to follow the “flaming heat of the sun of justice,” rather than the “candlelight of commonsense” (Selected Writings, 231) and to acknowledge poverty as the pearl of great price.

Though practicing voluntary poverty is difficult, there is a belief that through it one will both allow for and recognize God’s providence. Rather than sending the crowds into the surrounding villages to find sustenance, Jesus told the disciples to provide them simply with the little they had, and He made sure that it was enough (Luke 9:12-17). Furthermore, sharing in poverty is a transformative experience. Dorothy’s Easter meditation in April of 1964 stated, “The mystery of the poor is this: That they are Jesus, and what you do for them you do for Him. It is the only way we have of knowing and believing in our love. The mystery of poverty is that by sharing in it, making ourselves poor in giving to others, we increase our knowledge of and belief in love.”

Kate Farrell

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(Continued from page 5)

A Radical Change

1. The order of the day is to talk about the social order.
2. Conservatives would like to keep it from changing but they don't know how.
3. Liberals try to patch it and call it a New Deal.
4. Socialists want a change, but a gradual change.
5. Communists want a change, an immediate change, but a Socialist change.
6. Communists in Russia do not build Communism, they build Socialism.
7. Communists want to pass from capitalism to Socialism and from Socialism to Communism.
8. I want a change, and a radical change.
9. I want a change from an acquisitive society to a functional society, from a society of go-getters to a society of go-givers.

Peter Maurin
EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST CONFERENCE
Comforting the Afflicted, Afflicting the Comfortable
JULY 18-21
Workshops, Roundtable Discussions, Bonfire, Camping
Please email, call or text to RSVP
Hosted by The Catholic Worker Farm & A Pinch of Salt

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We can pick up people in small groups from Rickmansworth Underground Station
There is some bed space available and space to camp. Bring your own tent.
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How to get involved?

Financial Donations

Becoming a Committed Giver by filling out the Standing Order form is the best way to support us regularly. And help us sustain and increase our work.

If you want to support Mary House, our Mother and child house, directly please make cheques payable to St. Simeon’s Church Trust, send your cheque to us here at the Catholic Worker Farm and we will send you a Gift Aid form.

Welcome to our
Roundtable Discussions
1st Tuesday of the month
7 pm @ The CW-Farm

We begin with a simple meal, then a topic is presented for us to clarify our thoughts together.

Starting Soon
Topic to be announced on our website
Before coming please call 07983 477819

Join our Weekly Vigil for Peace

We sustain weekly Vigils at the Joint Military Headquarters in Northwood.

Please get in touch if you would like to join us. 07983 477819.

We need your HELP!

In the Garden
Weeding
Cutting grass
Picking fruit
Making jam
Cleaning the house
Moving furniture
General DIY
Counselling

Give us a ring if you have some time to spare.

C.W. FARM NEEDS

- Food, especially Sugar, Juice, Milk, Cheese, Butter, Flower & Cooking oil. At the moment we have enough tinned food.
- Home made Jam to sell.
- Cleaning Supplies such as sponges, sprays, gloves, dishwasher tablets and laundry detergent.
- Size 4 and 5 Nappies.

There are many ways in which you can get involved in this important work. Some examples are:
- Come and visit us!
- Become a live-in volunteer/intern
- Help our ladies with transport to appointments
- Come for a retreat in our beautiful Hermitage
- Pray for us - Without this, all the rest is impossible!
- Sign up for our newsletter & event invitations by post or email