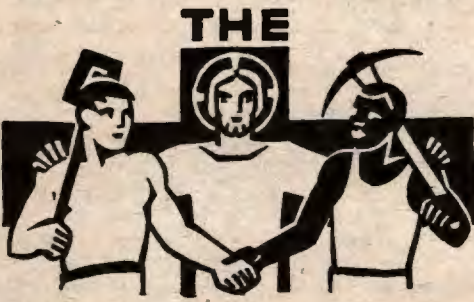


# CATHOLIC WORKER



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## ON PILGRIMAGE

By DOROTHY DAY

Why do I go around speaking where I am invited when there is so much to do at home? This question was very much in my mind as I woke at 4 a.m. this morning (not quite as early as the Trappist monks). I often awake thus troubled, but my bedside books are at hand—a missal, a Julian of Norwich, and this particular Sunday morning, St. Francis de Sales, a paperback given me yesterday by a young girl at the annual Anarchist conference at Hunter College here in N.Y!

My missal opened at yesterday's epistle, which begins, "The priests and elders were amazed as they observed the self-assurance of Peter and John and realized the speakers were uneducated men of no standing." This immediately gave me comfort. "Go where you are invited," Father McSorley, my first spiritual adviser, once told me. He was a man who listened, who never criticized. He knew instinctively that as a woman, as a convert, I was filled with uncertainties, always coming away from speaking engagements with the feeling that I was inadequate, had said what I had not intended to say, had talked too long about irrelevancies, had not "made my point" as Peter Maurin put it. (I do keep telling stories to illustrate my "point," but the Gospels are full of such stories.)

Today I must go up to a convent, an Academy of the Sacred Heart, and, at the Liturgy of their annual reunion, give a ten-minute homily. What an impossible assignment!

How could I in those few minutes deliver the message—give what was in my heart? "Thy will be done," was the topic assigned me. And "God's will is that all men be saved." St. Paul said that somewhere. All men. All the unworthy poor, the drunks, the drug-ridden, the poor mentally-afflicted creatures who are in and out of our CW houses all day. And yet Jesus told us what we were to do—feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, "worthy or unworthy." Oh, how much could be done if there were a house of hospitality in every neighborhood, in every parish! Lowering the tone of the neighborhood? We have heard this everywhere. In some cities we have been driven from pillar to post by it, forced to move many times. A long history could be written—Detroit, Rochester, etc., etc. Yet the news is full of murder, mugging, rape and all manner of violence taking place in every neighborhood from Park Ave. to the Bowery or the South Bronx.

"Those who have the substance of this world"—and close their hearts to the

(Continued on page 2)

## Grape Strikers in Coachella:

### They Must Have Help

By JAN ADAMS

On Monday, April 15, in California's Coachella Valley, one of the largest of the area's grape growers, Lionel Steinberg of Freedman Vineyards, signed a new one-year contract with the United Farm Workers of America. The following day, a small grower, K. K. Larson, who had had a pact with the UFW last year, reached agreement with Teamster Union officials on a three-year contract to cover his workers. The contract won—and the contract lost—tell the story of the hard struggle of farm workers as they enter the fourth week of this year's strike against grape growers who seek to destroy their union.

A member of the rank and file negotiating committee for the new Freedman contract insisted that the grower signed because "the people are strong for the union. Eighty-five percent are huelgistas—they would have gone on strike." Freedman employs about 600 workers during the thinning season just past and 800 for the harvest in late May and early June. The new contract, while continuing the standard UFW pesticide controls, hiring hall, and medical plan, raises wages to \$2.51 an hour. An important new provision is that working foremen will be chosen from the union seniority list, a blow against the paternalistic system in which anti-union growers use self-seeking crew leaders to frighten and confuse workers who assert themselves.

The Larson contract, giving the Teamsters his 100 workers, came after weeks of vacillation. In late March, according to Larson's account, he polled his workers with the assistance of a notoriously anti-UFW priest and they voted to have no union. A week later he admitted the truth of UFW organizer Manuel Chavez' charge that an election of which the union had not been advised in advance was invalid. He promised another election. Two days after that, Larson's wife said the secret ballot was off, that the workers wanted to be Teamsters. On April 16, after less than half a day of talks, Larson and Teamster officials agreed on a contract giving workers \$2.52 an hour.

#### Coercion and Confusion

The same day, I had the chance to talk with workers from the Larson vineyards and learned what had really happened. Two UFW staff members took me along on visits to the homes of the people in the state-run labor camp at Indio. The first man we talked to, the head of a family of 7, had worked for Larson for four years. He was known as a strong UFW supporter. This March, Larson and his woman crew leader had suddenly started complaining about his work. One day Larson appeared in the vineyard with a policeman and told the worker that since he was not working well, he (Larson) was going to have him arrested. Although the policeman, to his credit, did not manage to construe Larson's charge as lawbreaking, the whole farm worker family left the job. The striker insisted that he had been working as well as always—that he had only been harassed because he was known as a "Chavista", a UFW sympathizer. He then added sorrowfully that he and his family could not remain out on strike, but would have to get some work. The union people assured him of work at Freedman.

This man then led us to the home of a neighbor whose family was still working for Larson. The husband was not at home when we arrived and the wife appeared afraid to talk with us. We made visits to other homes in the camp and returned. Although the woman's husband had not yet returned, she invited us in and quickly began to pour out the story of the last few weeks of work at Larson's. Her husband soon joined us and added to the tale, evidently delighted to find sympathetic listeners. They spoke of being told one thing and then another by Larson and the crew leader, of signing things but not knowing what it was all about, and being generally harassed—until one day they were told they were to become members of the Teamsters Union. They vehemently denied any desire to become Teamsters and insisted they were with Chavez and the UFW. But they also knew they had to keep on working during the thinning season, one of the few times of the year they had an assured income. So they were still working. When the union staff members told them they could work at the UFW contract vineyard, they were ready to join the strike.

These stories illustrate the difficulty of the struggle farm worker families are carrying on in Coachella. Several hundred have been on strike since the second week in March, picketing daily in the 100 degree heat, trying to persuade workers in the fields to join them. So far they have received no strike benefits except gas for their cars. At the harvest, the union will try to pay some benefits, but it has nothing like the \$1.6 million the AFL-CIO donated last year. What funds there are will be distributed on the basis of need. Meanwhile, pickets will be up against the many, many farmworkers who cannot join the strike, however sympathetic they may be, because they must work.

If the sacrifices which the farm workers are making in Coachella to win their own union are to be fruitful, they must have help. The union desperately needs money for the strike. Send contributions to the United Farm Workers of America, Box 62, Keene, Cal. 93531. Since there are so many hungry families which cannot strike, the Coachella grapes will be harvested. They are likely to be poor quality because so many of the best workers are on the picket lines, but they will come to city markets. We can stop them there and force growers to recognize the UFW as the workers' union. Spread the word — **BOYCOTT GRAPES! BOYCOTT NON-UNION LETTUCE! BOYCOTT GALLO WINES!**

We cannot accept that the murderous course of history is irremediable and that the human spirit that believes in itself cannot influence the most powerful force in the world. The experience of recent generations convinces me that only the unbending human spirit taking its stand on the front line against the violence that threatens it, ready to sacrifice itself and to die proclaiming: Not one step further—only this inflexibility of the spirit can be the real defender of personal peace, universal peace and all humanity.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn



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## ON PILGRIMAGE

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poor." Am I going to make this kind of a judgment today on Fifth Ave., I, who have so much of the substance—books, radio, heat and hot water, food and clothing? (I could complain of crowding, of too much of the substance of this world all around me in shopping bags, clothes, suitcases, under the bed, over the bed on shelves, sometimes hardly a passage thru a dormitory to my own cluttered room which is office, library and guest room, too, when I am away.)

Can I talk about people living on usury, on the interest accruing from stocks and bonds, living on the interest, "never touch the principle," not knowing in what ways the infertile money had bred more money by wise investment in God knows what devilish nerve gases, drugs, napalms, missiles, or vanities, when housing and employment, honest employment for the poor were needed, and money could have been invested there? What houses the employed have been able to buy double in cost, what with interest and insurance added on.

### A Hard Job

To talk economics to the rich and Jesus to the anarchists gathered in convention these two days (and have to write this column) is a job. Besides, I did not "talk Jesus" to the anarchists. There was no time to answer the one great disagreement which was in their minds—how can you reconcile your Faith in the monolithic, authoritarian Church which seems so far from Jesus who "had no place to lay his head," and who said "sell what you have and give to the poor,"—with your anarchism?

Because I have been behind bars in police stations, houses of detention, jails and prison farms, whatsoever they are called, eleven times, and have refused to pay Federal income taxes, and have never voted, they accept me as an anarchist. And I in turn, can see Christ in them even though they deny Him, because they are giving themselves to working for a better social order for the wretched of the earth.

"God the Father had two sons," Jesus told His disciples this story. "The one said 'I will' and did not follow his command, and the other refused his command and yet went out and did what the Father commanded. Which one do you think the Father cherished?" Jesus concluded.

But Jesus also said "Judge not." And as He hung in torture from a Cross, "Father, forgive them," the jeerers, the mockers, the soldiers, the priests, the scribes and Pharisees. "They know not what they do." Stephen, not long after, said the same thing when he was being stoned to death. "Lay not this sin to their charge."

God wills that all men be saved. A hard saying for us to take and believe and hold to our heart to ease its bitterness. St. John of the Cross wrote, "Where there is no love, put love, and you will find love." He was in jail too, put there by his own brethren. "Our worst enemies are of our own household," Jesus said.

I will write about my pitifully brief jail experiences one day, God willing. Such brief episodes compared to the time spent by c.o.'s, the Martin Sostre's. Even the Berrigans' imprisonment seems light compared to Sostre's, Feliciano's and so many blacks who are serving long terms. So many of us are holy fools in the eyes of our friends and readers because we share their sufferings or try to.

### Holy Fools

But the term has a special meaning in Russian literature and is used to describe Myshkin in *The Idiot*, a truly Christ-like figure, and I was glad to see it used again in relation to Solzhenitsyn in an article in *Newsweek* last month. Every day the *Daily World* is filled with vituperation for Solzhenitsyn, which just goes to show how important he has become in the eyes of the Soviet bureaucracy, and how much he must have meant to other writers and scientists who were being harassed or imprisoned.

The *Daily World* is a good paper—you find news there you search for in vain in the prestigious press—but their contempt for Solzhenitsyn is unworthy of them. I too have been bothered by his own too obvious contempt for his persecutors. Now a professed Christian, honored by the world, and obviously a passionate lover of his country, he cries out against the monolithic Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and wastes his good energies showing his contempt, in one essay, for the youth who jeer at Easter churchgoers. Thank God church-going is not prohibited, even though it is granted because the Soviets are so sure they have eradicated the sense of the supernatural from the minds of the people, and exalted Science, Technology, as God.

Teilhard de Chardin writes: "Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for the second time in the history of the world, man will discover fire."

I hated, too, to hear Harry Bridges in a Bill Moyer interview on public tele-

(Continued on page 4)

## 36 East First

By ANNE MARIE FRASER

The Alleluia Chorus is resounding on this the third day of Easter; the evidence of the Resurrection is all around us. The trees seemed to wait until Easter Sunday to begin to bud and now they are bursting forth—trees behind brick walls and beside crumbling benches, trees that are lighted 24 hours a day by high crime lights, trees of the city. Occasionally you can even see a patch of crocuses or forsythia cautiously proclaiming our Good News.

Easter Sunday was peaceful and joyous at St. Joseph's House. I walked into the kitchen at 7 a.m. that morning and was greeted by Esther in her beautiful new brown-flowered dress. Kathleen and Terry scrambled eggs, browned potatoes and ham for the soup line, while Frank, Jane, Nina, Bill, Gerard, Dorsey, Tom, Jack, Arthur, Roger, Pat, Lee (I know I've forgotten someone) kept the dishes washed and on tables as the men streamed in to help us celebrate. There was plenty of good food for everyone with enough left over for brunch for the house. We owe very special thanks to Sr. Mary Stella, from St. Anthony's (a neighboring parish), for her gift of the ham and eggs and donuts (enough for over 200 people!).

### Getting a Bed

Such an occasion is always a welcome respite from some of the tragedy experienced by so many of our friends—tragedy that continues daily. The first day of Spring found Henry in the hospital with second and third degree burns of his back, chest, neck and arms. He had been wiping car windows on the Bowery for dimes and quarters when he stopped to light a cigarette. The rag he had been using had been soaked in gasoline, and when Henry lit the match the rag and his clothes ignited. A companion (Henry calls him The Moose) rolled Henry in coats and waited with him for the ambulance. Each day now Henry goes through the painful process of rebandaging; the recalling alone brings tears to his eyes. In telling us about his incident, Henry admitted it could have been someone's idea of a joke. Then he smiled and said, "It's a heck of a way to get a decent bed, isn't it?"

How many uncomplaining people we see who don't have a decent bed—who don't have any bed. In May of last year, the 36 East First column told of four women who had no home (four women among how many). The response of our readers was warm and generous, and



Ade Bethune

before long we were looking for a house for women. It has taken us a year to find and buy Maryhouse, a four-story brick house just two blocks from St. Joseph's House. The house was a music school with small individual practice rooms, some of them just right as individual rooms for the women who will come to live with us. There will be a library and a chapel, sitting rooms and an auditorium, a dining room and offices, and a yard. Hopefully the house will be a home for the women who live at St. Joseph's House, but also for women who sleep in doorways or who have been evicted from their apartments. But it is a challenging and frightening prospect, because Maryhouse is big and bigness is not part of the Catholic Worker. The Worker longs for things to be ever smaller. Many years ago Dorothy wrote

"... our idea of hospitality means that everyone with a home should have a guest room,"—a Christ room it's been called. And yet the sidewalk is the only Christ room for so many—and we have no choice but to buy a bigger house with hospitality for some of these friends, praying still for a Christ room in every house. We can look at our new home and pray that it may be filled with and shaped by the spirit of the Worker, and not that we be remolded by the structure. We can look around at the great need and pray that we may be small in spirit at least, realizing the need far outweighs our new attempt. As we go to press, we are still a long way from moving into Maryhouse. All the necessary repairs and alterations are being made, and it becomes obvious we will need much help.

### Goings and Comings

Things were especially tight for a while when Dan Corley and Tom Hart left us. For the past several months Dan's orange hat bobbing around St. Joseph's House was a sign of joy and hard work. When he wasn't on the soup line or talking to people around the house, Dan was coaching his basketball team at the neighboring Church of All Nations. Frequently the front door bell would ring and one of Dan's players would say, "Is Danny coming out to play?" A minute later Dan and his friends were heading across the street to shoot a few baskets. We look forward to his many promised visits after he resumes studies at Brown University in September. A few weeks after Dan left, Tom Hart rejoined his heart in San Francisco. When Tom arrived at the Worker last August he fell into the work and spirit of community faster than anyone else I remember. He was usually singing, if not an Irish song with Jane, then "I Left My Heart in San Francisco"—a fine Tony Bennett impersonation, or palying the spoons, or joining Jonas at a game of double solitaire. And each night at 7 he announced the praying of Vespers. We knew we'd never miss evening prayer while Tom was around. He'll spend the summer doing manual labor with Indians in Arizona, then back to the Franciscans in San Francisco. I'm sure the Martin de Porres House in San Francisco will see much of Tom—he's a lasting part of the C.W.

Shortly after Tom and Dan left, we were blessed with new people. Bill Griffin comes to help out with soup line and dinner. Gerard Garrigan arrived from St. Louis. They join Sister Armand from Puerto Rico who will spend several months in N.Y. at a nearby convent. Together they keep the soup line served. Brother Harold has successfully undertaken the mammoth job of cleaning the clothing room and has begun cooking once a week. With Bill Healy, Bill Butler, Ginny and Harold, we enjoy hearty and delicious meals. Mealtime is often a time for celebration (even in the chaos). Since our last issue, we celebrated birthdays with Dorsey Nettles, Robert Smith "Smitty," Charlie Killian, Mary Williams, and Mark Samara, not to mention Mr. Anderson, who counted his 75th. And we celebrated a feast day for St. Joseph, our constant intercessor!

Joe Myatt has undergone successful surgery in a series of operations to restore his hearing. Joe says his head is reeling with the sound of traffic and subways, but his grin reveals his gratitude and joy. Sadly, Joe Galea is back in St. Vincent's Hospital.

### Friday Night Meetings

Friday night meetings have continued to answer Peter Maurin's call for clarification of thought. Vieri Tucci brought us up to date on the work of Danilo Dolci in Sicily; Sighle Kennedy celebrated St. Patrick's day with us with a talk on Samuel Beckett; but once again Sidney Callahan's talk on "Anger in the Women's Movement" was snowed out. It has been rescheduled for a Friday in June (see box on p. 12). The most joyous meeting in a long time was on March

(Continued on page 10)



# Fasting: A Fiery and Mysterious Weapon

By EILEEN EGAN

(Fr. Edward Guinan, Paulist, the priest alluded to in this article, ended his 25-day fast in Washington, D.C., it was announced in an April 17th edition of the "Washington, D.C. Star." He had protested against the purchase of a \$525,000 mansion for a dwelling of the Archbishop as well as for offices for the diocese. Fr. Guinan used this occasion for demanding from Archbishop William W. Baum millions for the poor.—Peter Maurin always said we should make appeals, not demands!—The fast ended when the Archbishop announced that the building which had been acquired was to be sold, and the plans for it abandoned. Fr. Guinan in an interview with the "Star" said:

"That was a great thing the Archbishop did. I thought it was one of the great moments of grace. It was a great act and it shows that he is a humble man, a magnificent man of God."

"The implications of the top man in the archdiocese turning around before the entire public like that is something we have not seen or heard for a long time in this country. Archbishop Baum's decision has set an example of redeeming grace for us all."

I would like personally to add two comments to this story. To fast alone is a much harder thing than to fast with a group, as I did, and I do not like to be given any credit for it. Also, I think we must remember too the fasts of one of the great men of our time, Danilo Dolci, in his work for the poor in Sicily. (Dorothy Day)

During Lent, 1974, a young priest in Washington, D.C., announced that he had embarked on a fast on behalf of the poor. Lent in the Twentieth Century is no different from Lent in the Fifth Cen-

tury when Leo the Great told the Christian community that, "The fasting of the faithful is the banquet of the poor." Whatever can be saved by voluntary austerity should go to relieve the austerity and hunger forced upon the poor. A fast for the poor was not unusual, but the fast in the capital had an additional aspect.

The announcement of the fast was accompanied by a statement that the water fast would be "a fast to resolution," the resolution being a \$10 million annual commitment by the Catholic Archbishop of Washington to the poorest of God's poor in this city. Should a fast be coercive? Does a faster have the right to bind the wills of others to his will—even on behalf of the poor? Should such an action be called a hunger-strike rather than a fast? Was the fast in consonance with the Judeo-Christian and Gandhian traditions of fasting? The priest's action proved to be a point of departure to look more closely into the meaning of fasts voluntarily undertaken.

## Fast and Supplication

The Bible, beginning with the Old Testament, relates many stories of fasts. David's fast, united with prayers to the Lord to save the son born to him and Bathsheba, is revealing. Fasting among the children of Israel was joined to supplication to the Creator to grant a good or remove a threat of evil. Josephat "proclaimed a fast for all Juda" as enemy multitudes approached Jerusalem. Following the fast and public prayer, the fearful Israelites saw the multitudes turn on each other to mutual destruction. The peril was averted.

Such prophets of Israel as Jeremiah, Joel and Jonah urged that their people afflict themselves before God with fasting as an accompaniment of prayer. The affliction, voluntarily assumed, was

seen as the way to turn aside a larger affliction.

Isaiah and Zachariah brought a refinement to the message of fasting. To fast and to put on sackcloth and ashes were merely hypocritical acts unless the heart was changed. The fast was to be in truth a fast from sin and evil and was to flow out in works of mercy. "Is not this rather the fast that I have chosen? Loose the bond of wickedness, undo the bundles that oppress. Let them that are broken go free, and break asunder every burden." In addition, the children of Israel are to provide bread for the hungry, shelter for the shelterless and covering for the naked.

In the New Testament, the shock to



Rita Corbin

many of the contemporaries of Jesus was that his followers ate and drank while the followers of John fasted. Jesus answered this by saying that the time would come when his followers would fast, but that would be when he, "the bridegroom," was no longer with them.

Jesus himself, however, gave the example of fasting during his forty days in the desert. One of the temptations that came to him from the Adversary was in the form of food to satisfy his hunger. When the disciples asked Jesus why they

could not cast out evil spirits as he did, the reply came, "This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting." Perhaps this attestation is the single strongest indication anywhere in the scriptures of the great and mysterious power that can be unleashed by fasting. In afflicting oneself by a fast while calling upon God, one evokes the spirit and power of the Creator upon man and his world.

In our day, obligatory church rules of fast (as well as abstinence from meat) have been all but abolished. The connection between fasting and personal sanctification is not stressed as it was earlier. The old word "mortification" is hardly in anyone's vocabulary. The association between penance and "control of the passions" with fasting is less and less the subject for homilies. Fasting has become more closely associated with the attainment of social aims and the cessation of evil-doing by the community or society.

End the War-Fast was the call by Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam during the height of the conflict. It was a nationwide call issued before the Thanksgiving Holiday and called for some fasters to make public witness on the steps of the Capitol in Washington and at Plymouth Rock. The call was supported by various religious peace groups. Asserting that "it will take every ounce of courage we can muster to make an intransigent President and Pentagon stop their faking and bring all the troops home," the call continued, "With God's help we will find that courage. . . To find this courage, this discipline, we will fast. . ."

What can we learn from some specific examples of fasting against social evils or for the attainment of social and spir-

(Continued on page 9)

# Tivoli: a Farm With a View

By DEANE MARY MOWRER

Intimations of May are rare this April, for winds, wild as March, tornado watches, snow, sleet, cold rain, and grey days make a cruel mantle for Spring. Yet—as Miriam Carroll and I discovered, walking on a windy chilly Easter Monday—lilacs are breeding out of the dead land, and new leaves give promise of the fragrant plumes of May. Small gold blossoms jewel the fragile leafless branches of forsythia. Life stirs in dried tubers, making jonquils bloom in Gordon's little garden. Charlie Goodding tells me that during Holy Week he saw two blue birds and a mocking bird. Today, this Easter Week, I heard the lovely plaintive song of a white-throated sparrow.

## Emergence

It is Eastertide. Under a waning moon, a broken tomb spreads light through all the darkness. Good Friday's Cross is crescent with light, blossoming lilies. On Easter morning did not the Lamb laugh when Tanya, Josh, David, Came, and Kachina frolicked with the Easter bunny, rejoicing in his bright colored eggs and gifts, as children have done since memory began? For was He not Gift and Giver? And does He not hear in children's joy the true notes of Alleluia? While we who would sing Alleluia if we could, cry out with the great poet Hopkins—"Let Him Easter in us, Be a Day Spring to the dimness of us. . ."

Holy Week and Easter liturgies were quietly observed by our community, with simplicity the directive word rather than splendor. Holy Thursday the mood for these observances was set, I think, by the ritual Seder meal, planned by Miriam Carroll and Joe Goodding, but prepared and participated in by many. Later that evening Fr. Tony Equale said a Mass in the chapel, using the ritualistic washing of feet as a focal point in the liturgy. Easter Vigil, Midnight Mass, and Sunday morning Mass were said by Fr. Andy Chrusciel. Easter Vigil and Midnight

Mass were said in the dining room surrounded by the tables of the Holy Thursday meal. The kindling of the new fire took place outside. Standing there in the ancient nocturnal mystery, with the torrent in the ravine sounding in my ears like an aqueous *Lumen Christi*, at one with the feel and song of night, I thought that this was symbolic of emergence from the primal void, and of the ultimate unity of all God's Creation.

Unity was the theme of our Easter celebration. Considering our diversity and disparity of persons, our never-ending comings and goings, our antithetical attitudes and points of view, unity is hardly an achieved fact with us. It is indeed merely an ideal, but what is life without an ideal to strive for? And is He not our Hope, Who is the only Unifier?

Certainly a better climate for unity was prepared by the good food which we enjoyed at Eastertide. The delicious hot cross buns made by DD for after Midnight Mass, the various delicacies made by Kathleen, Carol, Mary Jo, and others; the wonderful dinner cooked by Alice Lawrence, Marcel, and with the help of many, the tedious shopping, fetching and carrying, and washing-up—again with many participating. Such work may well be a prayer.

On the afternoon of Laetare Sunday, another ritual was observed here which was a joyous occasion. Fr. Tony baptized Dennis Block, who came to live with us a few years ago when he was a student at Bard College. Since Emily Coleman, Dennis's good friend and godmother, was too ill to leave her bed and room, the baptism was held in Emily's room. Joe Geraci acted as godfather. It would be hard to say who was happier that day, Dennis or his godmother Emily.

## Discussion Series

Our Third-Sunday discussions continue. In March Fr. Lyle Young spoke to us about his work with men released from prison. Fr. Lyle has started a most unusual kind of halfway house in New

York City where so many men leave prison with no place to go but back to the same old crime. If there is hope to stem the tide of greed and crime and unbelievable evil, it must be through the love and dedication of such men as Fr. Lyle, and these small but real—person to person, not bureaucrat to client—and truly Christian relationships. May God bless Fr. Lyle and all those who come to him.

On the Third Sunday of April, Professor Jacques Travers of Brooklyn College will speak to us. On the Fourth Sunday of May, which will be dedicated to the memory of Peter Maurin, Dorothy Day has promised to speak.

Perhaps to alleviate the tedium of waiting for Spring really to arrive, Walter Kerell organized a lecture series making use of the very real talents in our midst. George Scherman began the series by speaking of the creative non-violent community with which he had worked in Washington, D.C. Tony spoke on Sacred Symbols, attempting to arrive at the fundamental conceptual meanings of myth, ritual, and symbol. John Coleman, a journalist living in France but here to visit his mother, Emily, talked on Amnesty International, a group which works for political prisoners all over the world, and which strives to expose and end the abomination of torture. Helene Iswolsky gave a profound and moving analysis of the problem of evil in the works of Dostoevsky. Finally George gave another talk on prisons and the desperate state of prisoners, and the great need for reform. The discussions following the talks were probing and interesting. We thank Walter and the speakers for a most stimulating week.

It is our hope to call upon these talents and others in our midst to present a series of Catholic Worker programs for some of our Summer weekends when we have more visitors than we know, what to do with. These weekend programs will be planned for dates not conflicting with

those of Clare Danielsson's program.

## Propitious Planting

All of our gardeners and farmers are impatient for more propitious plowing and planting time. Farmer John fills in his time with many chores, and waits—as a true farmer learns how to wait—for the rain-soaked clay in the upper fields to dry. Andy and Cliff keep working in the greenhouse, and have already set out some of the hardier plants. Florent looks after Jennifer and the compost heap. Gordon McCarthy and Arthur Sullivan have gardens started in front of the main house. Charlie Goodding has been acting as Gordon's chief assistant. Susie and Jack have done some early planting. Bob and Dorothy Corbin are planting the garden south of the mansion. George and Miriam are planning to help me with St. Francis' little garden.

Tony, Marge, Andy and several others have been working in a neighboring vineyard pruning over-grown vines. Once this vineyard starts bearing fruit again, we have been promised the grapes in return for pruning and harvesting.

Other community work continues with many helping. Marcel struggles with the recalcitrant plumbing, and shows weekly movies to counteract cabin fever. Stanley Vishnewski gives slide shows whenever visitors evince interest. Mary Jo struggles to get the shopping done without a proper car to make the trip. Vivien still uses her own long-suffering, much repaired car for community purposes, but is not sure how much longer it will hold out. Some hitch-hike. Charlie and Joe Goodding ride bicycles. Some of us just stay home.

We move toward apple-blossom time, and the lilacs of May. It is Our Lady's month, the birthday of the Catholic Worker, and the 25th anniversary of Peter Maurin's death. Pray for us, Peter that we shall never forget that the true teachings of Peter Maurin are the teachings of Christ. Sing, O robin, sing. Christ is risen. Alleluia.





# On Pilgrimage

(Continued from page 2)

vision dismiss Solzhenitsyn with a wave of his hand. "What do I care for such people as that," he said. And he repeated, as he had before when questioned about his trials during the McCarthy era, "All the accusations on which I was brought to trial were true, except that I was a member of the Communist Party. That I was not. All I can say now as I did then, is that in the Soviet Union every one has a job, has work to do, has education for that work, and health care." (These may not be his exact words. I should have sent for a transcript of the interview.) "They had work." Man had work to do. There were no men living on the sweat of some one else's brow and being considered gentlemen. Work was all-important.

"To make the kind of society where it is easier to be good," as Peter always said so simply, is our own task. These are the things Bridges cared about, though perhaps he has never read Kropotkin or Marx, or Ferrer on education, or Malatesta, or any other of the theoreticians of anarchism. Peter used to quote Lenin as saying, "There can be no revolution without a theory of revolution." The most important thing to Peter was first of all, clarification of thought, and he would have been a great talker at that Anarchist conference yesterday, had he been alive, finding many a concordance with them there.

But Bridges, though he disappointed me by not sharing my literary enthusiasm, is certainly in my mind one of the great labor leaders of this country, one of the greatest in its history. I had an entire evening's talk with him once in the home of John Brophy who was one of the vice-presidents of the newly formed CIO, a miner and a great labor leader himself who had the courage to go to the Soviet Union back in the thirties and suffered persecution in his day from most of the other labor leaders in this country, just as Bridges did.

I sympathized with Bridges as I listened on the Moyer hour because he recognized the importance of work and workers and saw to it that they had hiring halls instead of shapeup as they still have on many of our waterfronts today.

In other words, he had respect for work and workers, for the poor and unemployed, and his union became one of the great ones of the country. Let him rail at Solzhenitsyn all he wants. He still remains in my mind one of the greats in the history of labor in our country.

## Now We Have Cesar Chavez

To me, the great work which is being done by Cesar Chavez and his valiant band of boycotters and pamphleteers, demonstrators and jail frequenters, is a subject I must never neglect in any column I write now. His union, his philosophy of work which envisages a society much like that which the philosophical anarchists envisage, his theory of revolution which is a pacifist one following Gandhi, envisions not only unions but credit unions and a decentralized system of clinics, land held in common and in trust, land which can mean vast acreage for some crops which would mean cooperative farms, and settlements like those of the moshavim in Israel. I wish he (and I wish I too), could go on a pilgrimage such as that being led by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum to Israel, a tour being coordinated by Ms. Inge L. Gibel. Six black educators, clergymen and administrators (specialists in the development of low-income rural cooperatives in the southern states), are making this pilgrimage, and I will take great interest in their report. If anarchist and pacifist groups only had the backing which this tour has, it would make an interesting study occasion for such a union man as Cesar Chavez.

Come to think of it, if people ask me again what can they do with their stocks and bonds (or some of them), I could point out two very profitable investments, speaking both spiritually and materially. There are the works of the United Farm Workers Service Committee (tax exempt, P.O. Box 62, Keene, Calif. 93531) and Danilo Dolci's great labor of love in Sicily among the destitute. (He was called by Aldous Huxley the Gandhi of Sicily.) Dolci came into world fame when he gathered together an unemployed crowd of men in one of the workless villages

of Sicily and took them out on a reverse work strike. Without pay, without any one's orders, without food in their stomachs except perhaps some good Italian bread and wine (how significant an idea this is), the crowd of them went to a washed-out but necessary road and began to repair it. They were promptly (all of them) arrested for their pains. They wanted work. They wanted a chance to earn their daily bread. And by this gesture initiated by Danilo Dolci, they dramatized it to the world. Since then a movement has begun. Volunteers, many of them skilled, came from different parts of Europe and began to help too. By now there is quite an accomplishment in the way of dams built to irrigate the barren soil and grow more vineyards and other crops which provide more work for man. Property is proper for man, as Eric Gill said, and he meant the ownership of one's tools and one's home; and St. Gertrude said on the other hand that "property, the more common it becomes, the more holy it becomes." Perhaps she was thinking of the land, the good earth, from which we all come and to which we all return.

There was a man, not too well in mind and body who lived with us a while, who each year on the feast of the Incarnation, went out and knelt down and kissed the earth because Christ had taken on our humanity. We Catholics celebrate March 25th as a feast day for this reason. Our food, our drink, our furniture, the houses we inhabit, the coffin which we are buried in (once a tree), all come from the good earth, made holy by Christ putting on our human flesh. Likewise, thinking of Dolci's dams, Sigrid Undset, the Nobel prize winner for her great historical novels, stated that since Christ was baptized in the Jordan, all water had become holy. And now Dolci is trying to raise funds to build a school for the children of Sicily and he made his recent speaking trip to this country hoping to find investors in this school which so needs to be built. So I mention Danilo Dolci as a foreign investment to be made by any of our readers who wish to make a beginning of walking in this way of "the folly of the cross." (Aid for Dolci's work can be sent to the Friends of Danilo Dolci, c/o Robert Fontana, 9255 Shore Road, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11209.)

## More Travels, More Talk

When schools stop asking me to come, I will stay home. But meanwhile this next month, beginning two days before we go to press, I will go to South Dakota, a state where there are 38 Hutterite communities, and I do not know how many Indian reservations, and on to Kansas where I will speak to and learn from a Mennonite group at their Bethel College.

Travel sometimes is vacation, a period of solitude and silence, for long, often prayerful hours, meeting new friends, learning much from them. Last month an attack of flu, which we all had in turn around our New York house, made me cancel three engagements. Several of us lost our voices completely. Frank Donovan could not even answer the phone. I am sorry I had to miss my friends, the Berrigan family in Syracuse, and Fr. McVey who is carrying on a magnificent work there which I certainly want to write about. (I also want to write more about the two Berrigan brothers who are certainly holy fools in the sense I spoke of before. Martin Sostre who has suffered long years of solitary confinement, and has been in the West St. Federal Prison testifying in behalf of a fellow prisoner, recently called me. He and all prisoners think of the Berrigans with respect and love for their very act of going to prison, and will never forget it. Also I consider them victim souls whom God is using for his purpose to bring about changes in his Church which has been far worse, far more corrupt in the past.)

I missed also an engagement at New York University Catholic Center, and another in Cleveland with the Farm Workers. There is fatigue always in speaking, as there is at sitting at the typewriter doing this column, already too long. But there is also so much work around St. Joseph's House of Hospitality on First Street and getting ready for another new House for women, that I'll enjoy my travelling and rest in it, and know that many vacationers among the students will come to scrub and clean, cook and serve food and help keep the houses going.



# 25th Anniversary of Peter Maurin's Death

By WILLIAM D. MILLER

I write on Peter Maurin, the historian and teacher, from a contemporary academic perspective and not as one who, like some in the Worker movement today, has had a personal association with him. I have read most of what Dorothy Day has written about Maurin; I have studied Arthur Sheehan's biography of him; and just recently I was able to read a very good PhD dissertation on Maurin, written by Brendan O'Grady in 1954. Besides, I have read many of the books that Maurin used to talk about and, naturally, I have read his "Easy Essays."

But for a long time there was for me something elusive about Maurin. I had the testimony of Dorothy Day and others that he was a genius and a saint, and his "Easy Essays" contained ideas that added to a logical and forceful whole. Yet there was in my mind an aura about him—a quality of quaintness and simple-mindedness—that seemed to dominate and blur the meaning and impact of what he was saying. It was too easy, and much more fun, to reflect on his almost comic innocence and the vagaries of his behavior. These were things that one could talk about with a touch of amusing condescension, while at the same time reflecting warmly but at a distance on his "saintly" quality.

## The Unconventional Scholar

Perhaps to take such an attitude toward Maurin was an escape. After all, who was he, when one considered the prestigious accomplishments of America's institutionalized scholars? He had no important monographic publications; he had received no grants from any of the imperial institutions that direct the creative efforts of America's higher learning; he ignored the canons of ac-

ceptable scholarly writing (he did not use footnotes); and his outlay of extensive, finely combed empirical verification for his generalizations was practically non-existent.

For anyone initiated into the sacred rites of contemporary scholarship, Peter Maurin, the historian, merited only a footnote. Yet it is against what today can be seen as the mounting aimlessness of higher education, insofar as a humanistic vision is concerned, that Maurin as a teacher registers his uniqueness and his truth. For what appears to be happening in higher learning is a violent and pervasive mushrooming of facticity that sterilizes and aborts the work of intellectual creativity. The universe today is not one of a process of shadows and symbols into which the scholar looks for an insight that gives to human existence its highest due. It is instead a universe of flow and sense, and the work of the scholar is to support and amplify this fundamental assumption. In such a universe the idea of an enduring and transcendental meaning for humankind is not just lost; it becomes a hostile perversion of the "true" objective of higher learning: the discovery of norms of existence by which all can live in the controlled climate of a stress-free and sense-full life.

The professor, therefore, does not profess but contemplates the configuration of his data base, hoping, it would seem, for the revelation that will let him advance against whatever remaining vestiges of tradition that would suggest a

transcendent answer to existence. And so the search for meaning (which because the *homo sapiens* ability to symbolize and reflect is the main trait that separates him from the other species), is thrown down the drain and supplanted by the infinitely easier business of fact analysis. It is this endless proliferation of fact that absorbs the energy of the modern scholar and which, in view of the human irrelevance of his innocuous conclusions, reduces particularly the historian's labors to an increasingly pointless activism.

## Intuitionist Historian

Maurin's significance as an historian and teacher is that his intellectual quest was toward nothing but meaning. One could recount at length, as others have done, how unencumbered his life was of the things that ordinarily distort vision and inhibit freedom. The game of facticity was one of those time-whiling eddies of scholarship that he avoided in his own methods. He moved from idea to idea, always synthesizing, pinpointing meaning in what he regarded as its most profoundly human terms. He took great synthesizing leaps that ranged over the major peaks in the cultural and intellectual history of the Western world. And his genius as an historian was his intuitionist sense of what in the past related most directly to the contemporary crisis in human affairs.

Again, one can only think of the suspicious and uncomprehending response of many of the established historians to a mind such as Maurin's. But how can

there be history without facts, it might be asked. The answer is that there can be no history without facts; the more facts there are that can be put into some intelligible relationship to each other, the better. Yet it must be recognized that the "facts" of history themselves are not a reality, but only a symbol representation of a set of ideas, or phenomenal interactions that bear a definable symbol stamp. Ferreting out and creating these symbol-stampings is certainly the primary work of the historian.

From this point on, however, the fact has two functions. It becomes the instrumental material for synthesizing, which when directed toward meaning, even into the ultimate realms of metaphysical and theological speculation, represents the highest and most creative work of the historian. Supporting this function is the work of the historian as the traditionalist, who again uses facts instrumentally, establishing a sense of community with the past, highlighting and enshrining the humanizing elements of past culture so that humankind might have a clearer vision of the way to progress toward truly human ends. This whole view looked beyond the workings of political and institutional forms. Looking finally into the human spirit, it could only think of the contemporary



PETER MAURIN

formalisms associated with an arid fact-coining as a sign of a time when vision had been lost.

## Meaning Is the Measure

This was the way in which Peter Maurin viewed history and its uses. It was a history that made man the final measure of its worth and which disassociated itself from the Enlightenment dogma that history was to reveal "progress." It was a history that was whole, not linear and time-serving.

There are others, of course, who in the twentieth century have reacted against the final sterility of the game of facticity. Lewis Mumford is an outstanding example, but one thinks mostly of Henry Adams, who in writing his histories scrupulously observed the requirements of an advanced nineteenth century.

To be old is a glorious thing when one has not unlearned what it means "to begin."

Martin Buber (Continued on page 9)

# On the Farming Commune

By STANLEY VISHNEWSKI

The following Easy Essay by Peter Maurin has never before been published. It was written during a controversy between the scholars and the workers on the Farming Commune at Easton, Pa. To clarify the issue, Peter wrote the essay and posted it on the bulletin board. I came across it recently in my personal files. The Essay and the account of how it came to be is taken from my unpublished manuscript on the Catholic Worker, *The Wings of the Dawn*.

## ON THE FARMING COMMUNE

By Peter Maurin

- 1/ A Catholic Worker Farming Commune is a farm where Catholic Workers work in community.
- 2/ To work on a Farming Commune is to cooperate with God in the production of food for the feeding of men.
- 3/ Children and invalids cannot work but they must be fed.
- 4/ Catholic Workers must do more than their share so as to be able to feed the children and invalids.
- 5/ Gentlemen farmers and lady farmerettes are not workers they are shirkers.
- 6/ Time is a gift of God and must be used to serve God by serving men.
- 7/ Gentlemen farmers don't live on the sweat of their own brow.
- 8/ Gentlemen farmers are neither gentlemen or farmers and lady farmerettes are not very useful on a farming commune.

In an effort to bridge the gap between the workers and the scholars as well as the guests, Peter Maurin would try to set an example by working four hours a day. The work he selected was road mending. Peter would never coerce anyone to work with him. He did it by example and by the strength of his personality.

Peter would announce at the table that he was going to spend a few hours working on the road, and that anyone was free to work with him. The work consisted mainly of breaking large stones into small ones to fill the potholes and to smooth out the road. He kept several hammers handy for anyone who cared to come and work with him.

Peter believed that no man should be forced to work at any job he hated. He felt that men should offer their services freely as a gift.

Peter set us the example of a Worker-Scholar. He told us that if everyone did his share (he excluded the sick and the children) it would be possible to do all the work required for the upkeep of the community in a four-hour day. The rest of the time could be devoted to doing craft work, reading, writing and generally improving the mind and the body. I got the point that an idle person was not an idol on the farm.

To carry on the indoctrination of the community, Peter would write in his beautiful script some observations he had gleaned from his reading. These were to be used, he hoped, as the subject of discussion for the day. Each day he would write three pages under the heading of Cult, Culture and Cultivation. These would be posted on the bulletin board.

## That Which Unites

Peter wanted people to be able to think and to reason for themselves. He wanted people to be able to master situations and not just subjects. It was for this reason that he refused to give a "blue print" for a new social order or for the con-

struction of the ideal Farming Commune. Peter was wise enough to know that this was impossible to do. He would try to indicate the direction in which people should go to lay the foundations for a new social order—a society which was to be constructed within the framework of the old.

Peter Maurin believed that people should be able to think for themselves and master situations as they arose. He did not want to tie the Catholic Worker to some pre-arranged scheme which would inhibit it from dealing with the unknown problems of the future. The Catholic Worker, as a Movement, was to be flexible to master situations as they arose.

In his gentle discussions, Peter would always try to find common ground for agreement. He would seek for that which sought to unite rather than for that which would divide. He would tell the person with whom he was discussing: "You give me a piece of your mind, and I will give you a piece of my mind, and that way we both will have more."

But some of the men were not used to the personal responsibility that Peter taught. They turned it into a perversion of personalism. They said they could do as they pleased and that no one could tell them what to do. On the other hand, his teaching of "firing the boss" and "personal responsibility" confused and bewildered others who had drifted in off the road. They were happy only when being bossed and were confused by the freedom which they found in the Catholic Worker. It was in response to this situation, and in an effort to clarify what he thought the Farming Commune should be that Peter wrote his Easy Essay *On The Farming Commune*.



# Of Holy Work

By PAT JORDAN

A poster hangs on the office door of the Catholic Worker here in New York which proclaims: "Work is love made visible." This sentiment of the great Dominican Gerald Vann has been a guiding principle for generations of Catholic Workers, and is central to a Catholic Worker philosophy of work. The very name of the movement indicates this.

## Peter Maurin's View

Lewis Mumford writes: "There is no substitute for work except other serious work" (*The Pentagon of Power*). Peter Maurin would have agreed. A worker and student all his life, he insisted all work be done well. He came from a family rooted in work, French farmers who knew what Charles Peguy has called the "honor of work." In the various houses of hospitality and farming communes which the Catholic Worker created during his lifetime, Peter taught the young volunteers who came what was in his blood for generations. "Work for them [the peasants] was joy itself and the deep root of their being, the reason of their being. There was an incredible honor in work, the most beautiful of all honors, the most Christian, perhaps the only one which stands of itself. And today everyone is bourgeois" (Peguy, *Basic Verities*). The last sentence indicates Peguy's disdain of those who live by the sweat of other men and women's brows, and Peter Maurin shared this disdain.

In another passage, Peguy says of the French peasants: "Everything was a rhythm and a rite and a ceremony, from the moment of rising in the early morning. Everything was an event; a sacred event. Everything was a tradition, a lesson."

"Laughingly, they used to say, and that to annoy the priests, that to work is to pray. And little did they know how true that was..." (*Basic Verities*).

Peter Maurin saw in work a necessity and a gift, the fulfillment of one of the human person's highest urges, creativity. He rejected the modern concept that work is a commodity. "The Catholic Worker / does not credit / bourgeois capitalism," he wrote, "with an historical mission. / It condemns it / on the general principle / that labor is a gift, / not a commodity." In conjunction with this he wrote in another of his *Easy Essays*, "Labor is not a commodity / to be bought and sold. / Labor is a means of self-expression, / the worker's gift to the common good."

Much of Peter's thought on the com-

not wealth or property was the bestower of all worth and dignity."

Peter Maurin taught in the same vein. He wished to create a new society, what he called a "functional society" rather than an acquisitive society. In an interview he stated, "A functional society is a society in which each member strives to foster the common good, a society of go-givers instead of go-getters, a society of idealists rather than materialists." He saw the means of creating such a society in the responsible and daily work of all society's members: "Creative labor / is what keeps people / out of mischief. / Creative labor / is craft labor. / Mechanized labor / is not creative labor. / Carlyle says: / 'He who has found his work, / let him look / for no other blessedness.' / But workmen / cannot find happiness / in mechanized work... / Eric Gill says: / 'The notion of work / has been separated / from the notion of art. / The notion of the useful / has been separated / from the notion of the beautiful. / The artist, / that is to say, / the responsible workman, / has been separated / from all other workmen. / The factory hand / has no responsibility / for what he produces.'"

## The Individual's Vocation

"No matter how marvelous our inventions, how productive our industries, how exquisitely automatic our machines, the whole process may be brought to a standstill by its failure fully to engage the human personality or to serve its needs... In short: we must do justice to the whole nature of man before we can make the most of our mechanical improvements" (Lewis Mumford, *In the Name of Sanity*).

Of the three levels on which each person functions (the personal, the social and the spiritual), Peter Maurin saw the starting point for any development of the whole human being to be the personal. A person's work, as Mumford indicates, has bearing on her / his whole nature, and (as Peter learned from Eric Gill) on her / his whole life. In 1917 Eric Gill wrote to Henry Atkinson, an antagonistic proponent of mechanized labor: "We say that normally... a man finds his greatest interest and pleasure and enthusiasm in his work; that that work to bear him that fruit of interest and pleasure must be work by which he earns his living and not merely work done in his spare time...; that such work to bear fruit, must be such as the worker is responsible for, not merely for its lack of faults but for its merits" (*Letters of Eric Gill*). Peter shared these sentiments, and as we have already seen, quotes Gill to support his argument that the artist is one who is in the deepest sense a responsible worker.

We commonly identify creativity with the artistic process. But Peter extended this application to the work of all men and women: the baker, the farmer, the stone mason. Such creativity enhances and is the fruit of true individuation, the means of self-fulfillment and self-expression, a form of service to the whole community. This basic need for a sense of personal worth must be met. Sharon Atkins, a receptionist interviewed by Studs Terkel, put it this way: "I don't know what I'd like to do. That's what hurts the most. That's why I can't quit the job. I really don't think I'd mind going back and learning something, taking a piece of furniture and refinishing it. The type of thing where you know what you're doing and you can create and you can fix something to make it function" (Studs Terkel, *Working*). Work without some sense of creativity, of intrinsic worth, of dignity, is slavery. It hardly inspires love.

Peter Maurin saw that among the flaws of modern productionism is that, in its haste, modern productivity has taken the largesse out of time. Time is now money, and on the assembly lines and in the mechanized agricultural fields, the tempo of production has been increasingly accelerated. It can be seen even affecting our prayers. (A recent picture in the Catholic press shows a priest dis-

tributing communion on a train to commuters during Holy Week, his chasuble bearing the symbols of the Rail Road!) Lewis Mumford has wonderfully illuminated this matter of time. It was the widespread use of clocks in the XIII Century, he contends, that more than anything else marked the end of the medieval period and the beginning of the modern, secular era. Of present day business, he concludes, "The modern industrial regime could do without coal and iron and steam easier than it could do without the clock" (*Technics and Civilization*).

This use of the clock as keeper of time, as the policeman which dictates all our

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moves for the sake of efficiency, has brought us to the brink of social neurosis. Terkel quotes another worker in conjunction with this slavery to the clock, and how such bondage mitigates against the creation of community amongst workers. Grace Clements, a factory worker: "We work 8 straight hours, with two 10-minute coffee breaks and one 20-minute break for lunch. If you want to use the washroom, you have to do that in that time. By the time you leave your tank [she dips felt in a tank

## Catholic Worker Positions

The general aim of the Catholic Worker Movement is to realize in the individual and in society the expressed and implied teachings of Christ. It must, therefore, begin with an analysis of our present society to determine whether we already have an order that meets with the requirements of justice and charity of Christ.

The society in which we live and which is generally called capitalist (because of its method of producing wealth) and bourgeois (because of the prevalent mentality) is not in accord with justice and charity—

**In Economics**—because the guiding principle is production for profit and because production determines needs. A just order would provide the necessities of life for all, and needs would determine what would be produced. From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. Today we have a non-producing class which is maintained by the labor of others with the consequence that the laborer is systematically robbed of that wealth which he produces over and above what is needed for his bare maintenance.

**In Psychology**—because capitalist society fails to take in the whole nature of man but rather regards him as an economic factor in production. He is an item in the expense sheet of the employer. Profit determines what type of work he shall do. Hence, the deadly routine of assembly lines and the whole mode of factory production. In a just order the question will be whether a certain type of work is in accord with human values, not whether it will bring a profit to the exploiters of labor.

**In Morals**—because capitalism is maintained by class war. Since the aim of the capitalist employer is to obtain labor as cheaply as possible and the aim of labor is to sell itself as dearly as possible and buy the products produced as cheaply as possible, there is an inevitable and persistent conflict which can only be overcome when the capitalist ceases to exist as a class. When there is but one class the members perform different functions but there is no longer an employer-wage-earner relationship.

## To Achieve This Society We Advocate:

A complete rejection of the present social order and a non-violent revolution to establish an order more in accord with Christian values. This can only be done by direct action since political means have failed as a method for bringing about this society. Therefore we advocate a personalism which takes on ourselves responsibility for changing conditions to the extent that we are able to do so. By establishing Houses of Hospitality we can take care of as many of those in need as we can rather than turn them over to the impersonal "charity" of the State. We do not do this in order to patch up the wrecks of the capitalist system but rather because there is always a shared responsibility in these things and the call to minister to our brother transcends any consideration of economics. We feel that what anyone possesses beyond basic needs does not belong to him but rather to the poor who are without it.

We believe in a withdrawal from the capitalist system so far as each one is able to do so. Toward this end we favor the establishment of a Distributist economy wherein those who have a vocation to the land will work on the farms surrounding the village and those who have other vocations will work in the village itself. In this way we will have a decentralized economy which will dispense with the State as we know it and will be federationist in character as was society during certain periods that preceded the rise of national states.

We believe in worker-ownership of the means of production and distribution, as distinguished from nationalization. This to be accomplished by decentralized co-operatives and the elimination of a distinct employer class. It is revolution from below and not (as political revolutions are) from above. It calls for widespread and universal ownership by all men of property as a stepping stone to a communism that will be in accord with the Christian teaching of detachment from material goods and which, when realized, will express itself in common ownership. "Property, the more common it is, the more holy it is," St. Gertrude writes.

We believe in the complete equality of all men and women under the Fatherhood of God. Racism in any form is blasphemy against God who created all mankind in His image and who offers redemption to all. Man comes to God freely or not at all and it is not the function of any man or institution to force the Faith on anyone. Persecution of any people is therefore a serious sin and denial of free will.

We believe further that the revolution that is to be pursued in ourselves and in society must be pacifist. Otherwise it will proceed by force and use means that are evil and which will never be outgrown, so that they will determine the END of the revolution and that end will again be tyranny. We believe that Christ went beyond natural ethics and the Old Dispensation in this matter of force and war and taught non-violence as a way of life. So that when we fight tyranny and injustice and the class war we must do so by spiritual weapons and by non-cooperation. Refusal to pay taxes, refusal to register for conscription, refusal to take part in civil-defense drills, non-violent strikes, withdrawal from the system are all methods that can be employed in this fight for justice.

We believe that success, as the world determines it, is not the criterion by which a movement should be judged. We must be prepared and ready to face seeming failure. The most important thing is that we adhere to these values which transcend time and for which we will be asked a personal accounting, not as to whether they succeeded (though we should hope that they do) but as to whether we remained true to them even though the whole world go otherwise.



mon good is based on the writings of Arthur J. Pentz, a social historian at the turn of the century. Wrote Pentz in his *A Guildsman's Interpretation of History*: "We must not forget that the sense of brotherhood and human solidarity was restored to the world by Christianity after it had been broken up by the growth of capitalism under the Roman Empire. This sense of the brotherhood of mankind made possible the Just Price which was the central economic idea of the Middle Ages. It was an idea unthinkable in Rome, where conquest and exploitation seemed but the natural order of the universe. The Just Price left no room for the growth of capitalism by the manipulation of exchange, for it demanded that currency should be restored to its primary and proper use as a medium of exchange." Later in the same book, Pentz stated that, "During the Middle Ages the theory obtained that work and



# CULTURE ATION ::

before adhering it to the luggage the factory produces], you go to the washroom, freshen up a bit, go into the recreation room; it makes it very difficult to finish small lunch and be back in the tank in 10 minutes. So you don't really have too much time for conversation."

Mrs. Clements goes through the same set of motions every 40 seconds on the luggage factory assembly line. Each complete motion includes her taking about 10 steps, and she accomplishes this about (Continued on page 12)

By MICHAEL DE GREGORY

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." In the Gospel according to Matthew these words begin Christ's first sermon to the world. This teaching is central to a Christian life, and marks Christianity as the religion of poverty. Aware of this, the Catholic Worker, since its inception, has embraced voluntary poverty as a way of life. Yet more than any other aspect of the Catholic Worker, voluntary poverty is probably the least understood. In our age, especially, voluntary poverty needs to be not only understood, but experienced in our daily lives.

To understand voluntary poverty as

a way of life, it is necessary to first look at our world in which humanity is tragically divided into a rich minority and a poor majority. In the United States, the richest nation in the world, there are areas devastated by poverty and hunger. In urban ghettos and on skid rows, among rural sharecroppers and migrant farm workers, material poverty is a fact of life. And among the other nations of the world, the economic division between the developed West and the developing Third World is more distinct. In the starkest statistical terms, the privileged 20% of the world's population control 80% of the world's resources. The United States alone, containing only 5% of the world's population, consumes 50% of the world's disposable resources and possesses 40% of the world's income. Such statistics on world poverty and hunger abound, but their significance is easily lost in their magnitude. The cold statistic that two-thirds of all deaths recorded each year in the world are due to hunger or problems arising from hunger is perhaps more comprehensible in all its human tragedy. This distribution of the world's goods does not abate, for whether it is within nations or between nations, the clearest economic trend in the world today is this: the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.

## A Way of Life

To speak of voluntary poverty in this setting, to call poverty "holy" as St. Hilary does, is to invite confusion and misunderstanding. Yet as Dorothy Day wrote in the forties, "We can only talk about voluntary poverty because we believe Christians must be fools for Christ. We can only embrace voluntary poverty in the light of faith." For it is a paradox, like the Folly of the Cross, that it is only as we voluntarily embrace poverty that we can overcome poverty.

However, the poverty that the Catholic Worker embraces is not the poverty that the world knows. The poverty that Jesus Christ calls "blessed" is not the destitution experienced by the mass of humanity. Voluntary poverty is not material destitution, a want for the necessary food, clothing, and shelter so essential to make a human life worthy of the name. Rather it is a realization of what is actually needed, accompanied by a desire to amass no more. Voluntary poverty is an understanding of the truth that the less we take ourselves, the more others can have. It is to listen to the counsel of St. Paul to "Let our abundance supply their want."

Voluntary poverty is simply a means. It is not an end in itself. We must avoid the danger of making poverty a Christian ideal in itself. Man, made in the image of God, was not made to starve. Destitution is not the poverty we seek. St. Thomas Aquinas wrote that voluntary poverty "is good only because it is useful to remove the obstacles which stand in the way of spiritual perfection." Even though it is unattainable, we are all called to be perfect, so we are called to poverty. For voluntary poverty is not primarily a religious vow for the few, but a responsibility for all Christians. Dorothy further writes: "Once we begin not to worry about what kind of house we are living in, what kind of clothes we are wearing, once we give up the stupid recreation of the world; we have time—which is priceless, to remember that we are our brothers keepers and that we must not only care for his needs as far as we are immediately able, but we must try to build a better world."

At its deepest level voluntary poverty is a way of seeing the world and the things of the world. This vision is a liberation from the concerns of the world in order to serve, with charity and justice, both God and our neighbor.

In the Beatitudes according to Luke, the "poor in spirit" are given flesh, are made real human persons. Luke writes very simply: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God. Blessed are you that hunger now for you shall be satisfied." But to the wealthy he

warns: "Woe to you that are rich for you have received your consolation. Woe to you that are full now for you shall hunger."

Luke is not writing here to canonize or condemn any social class. He simply expresses a truth of Christianity: it is no accident that Christ came a poor man among men.

Although it is possible for a rich man to be detached from his goods, and a poor man greedy, voluntary poverty is surely not a comfort to the wealthy and powerful. The Gospels are quite clear: the rich man is told to sell all he has and give to the poor, for it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a



needle than for a rich man to enter heaven. And we are clearly instructed that "you can not serve God and Mammon." Voluntary poverty is similar to the relationship of faith and good works in the epistle of St. James. For its essence to be truly spiritual, voluntary poverty must be manifested in a visible way of life.

Some of the ambiguities about voluntary poverty are rooted in man's uniqueness. Voluntary poverty cannot be regimented; in this it is clearly of the spirit. An individual's needs vary with culture and personality, often extending beyond basic food, clothing and shelter. It is the degree of concern about these essentials that distinguishes the poor man in the biblical sense. (Surely the man who suffers hunger as a way of life is understandably concerned about his next meal.) However, Christians who are called to poverty and who are well fed and clothed should not worry about these needs. Gibran writes, "Is not the dread of thirst when the well is full the thirst which is unquenchable?" The poverty we seek to embrace is an absence of such "dread." We must believe that we are of more value than the "birds of the air" and the "lilies of the field." And we must be assured that as God cares for them He will care for us.

The poor man is the person who prays simply in faith, "Our Father . . . give us this day our daily bread," and who trusts that he will receive all that is required. He takes to heart the words of Christ, "Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. . . . Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

It is in seeking this kingdom that voluntary poverty is so important. For the vision of voluntary poverty is a vision of a new world, a world of justice and peace. The psalmist announces this coming kingdom in which "Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss." Voluntary poverty provides not only the vision but also the way of life to "build a better world."

## Poverty and Justice

The poor man is the man of justice. Eric Gill understood this and wrote clearly, ". . . the poor man, in the Gospel sense, in the sense of Jesus, is not he who has been robbed but he who has not robbed others." The Old Testament prophets shared this understanding, and the early Church Fathers taught it. The prophets vigorously condemned the causes of material poverty as exploitation

(Continued on page 8)

## Peter Maurin: Easy Essays

### I WANT A RADICAL CHANGE

Modern society has made the / bank account the standard of values. / When the bank account / becomes the standard of values / the banker has the power. When the banker has the power / the technician has to supervise / the making of profits. When the banker has the power / the politician has to assure law and order / in the profit-making system. When the banker has the power / the educator trains students / in the technique of profit making. When the banker has the power / the clergyman is expected to bless the profit-making system / or to join the unemployed. When the banker has the power / the Sermon on the Mount is declared impractical. / When the banker has the power we have an acquisitive / not a functional society. I want a change, / and a radical change. / I want a change from an acquisitive society / to a functional society, from a society of go-getters / to a society of go-givers.

### THE PERSONALIST COMMUNITARIAN

A personalist / is a go-giver, / not a go-getter. He tries to give / what he has, / and does not try to get / what the other fellow has. He tries to be good / by doing good / to the other fellow. He is altro-centered, / not self-centered. He has a social doctrine / of the common good. He spreads the social doctrine / of the common good through words and deeds. / He speaks through deeds as well as words, / for he knows that deeds speak louder than words. / Through words and deeds he brings into existence / a common unity, the common unity / of a community.

### WHAT MAKES MAN HUMAN

To give and not to take, / that is what makes man human. To serve and not to rule, / that is what makes man human. To help and not to crush, / that is what makes man human. To nourish and not to devour, / that is what makes man human. And if need be / to die and not to live, that is what makes man human. / Ideals and not deals, that is what makes man human. / Creed and not greed, that is what makes man human.

### THE WORKS OF MERCY

The love for God and neighbor / was the characteristic of the first Christians. / This love was expressed through the daily practice / of the Works of Mercy. To feed the hungry, / to clothe the naked, / to shelter the homeless, / to instruct the ignorant / at a personal sacrifice / was considered / by the first Christians as the right thing to do. / Surplus goods / were considered to be superfluous / and therefore / to be used to help the needy members / of the Mystical Body.

### 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 need. The Catholic Worker believes / in creating a new society within the shell of the old / with the philosophy of the new, a philosophy so old / that it looks like new.

### THE WILL TO CO-OPERATE

When someone / has something / considered by the common man / to be beneficial / to the common good, he is admired / by the common man. / The admiration of unselfish men / who are not afraid / to take the initiative, creates the desire / among the admirers / to climb on the bandwagon / of men of initiative. / They want to be part of an unselfish movement. / They are willing / to make sacrifices for the common cause. / So the will to co-operate is the result / of the daring / of unselfish men.



# PETER MAURIN, PACIFIST

By ROBERT GILLIAM

Though it is clear that Peter Maurin was a pacifist, it was not he who articulated and developed the position of the Catholic Worker. He was strangely silent on the subject. "Maurin was completely a man of peace, but he never reached the point of making his pacifism a pronouncement."<sup>1</sup> Two of his Easy Essays deal with the question of war. Most of what is known of Peter's position and experience comes from Arthur Sheehan's biography.

Peter Maurin, then a Christian Brother, was conscripted into the French army in November of 1898. He served about ten months, after which time he returned to religious life and teaching. His brother, a member of the same religious community, recalls that:

Above all, after his year of military service, Aristide Peter Maurin reflected deeply. . . From this time, he became interested in politics and held very advanced ideas on social organization and on pacifism, ideas common today but at that time seemingly subversive of the established order.<sup>2</sup>

It was at that time that Peter became involved with the Sillon movement. Though the Sillon was not primarily a pacifist or antiwar movement, it was deeply interested in the question of peace. According to Peter's brother, "It returned again and again to a program for peace, religious peace, social peace, international peace."<sup>3</sup>

"The Sillon, too, was in sympathy with a Tolstoyan kind of pacifist opposition to the rising spirit of nationalism and militarism."<sup>4</sup> In 1907 Peter was again con-

scripted and spent about a month in the army. Having no positive reason to remain in France, and resenting the continuing threat of conscription, he left France in 1909 to homestead on the plains of Saskatchewan. Peter's homesteading partner soon died, however, the farm failed, and Peter drifted south, entering the United States in 1911. Throughout World War I he lived in the States doing unskilled labor. It was not until 1926, when "he underwent some great religious experience,"<sup>5</sup> that he began slowly to formulate the synthesis and program which would finally take concrete form in the Catholic Worker movement seven years later.

One may speculate that Peter's silence on the question of war is related to the fact that his thought took specific shape during the late 1920s and early 1930s, a period when the question of war was eclipsed by far more pressing and immediate economic questions. It was the radical reconstruction of economic and social life, the vision of a new society, which absorbed him. Dorothy Day has written that, "He much preferred to write about how things should be . . ."<sup>6</sup> Dorothy also remembers that at the beginning of World War II Peter said, "Perhaps silence would be better for a time than to continue our opposition to war. Men are not ready to listen . . ."<sup>7</sup> Peter kept that public silence. Privately, however, according to Arthur Sheehan, he took a clearly pacifist position:

Peter's own views were based on the counsels of perfection. He did not engage in discussions on the morality of modern warfare but left that for others . . . At Easton, during a summer school, Peter

explained to one student the natural right of self-defense and the conditions for a just war, but said his way was that of St. Francis, of following the counsels.<sup>8</sup>

Peter's views on peace reminded his listeners of St. Francis of Assisi, Gandhi, and Tolstoy. All had been moved by Christ's Sermon on the Mount. Peter was steeped in this spirit Christ had proposed as the more perfect way. . .<sup>9</sup>

In his Easy Essay, "In the Light of History," Peter Maurin spoke of the causes and results of the First World War:

So since 1776 / looking for markets / has engaged man's activities. / And since trade follows the flag, / industrial nations / have also become / imperialist nations. / The fight for markets / between two industrial nations, / England and Germany, / was the main cause of the World War. / As President Wilson said, / the World War / was a commercial war. / But a commercial war / had to be idealized, / so it was called / a War for Democracy. / But the War for Democracy / did not bring Democracy, / it brought Bolshevism. . . / Fascism. . . / Nazism. . .

In another essay, "War and Peace," he wrote:

We call barbarians / people living / on the other side of the border. / We call civilized / people living / on this side of the border. / We civilized, / living on this side of the border / are not ashamed / to arm ourselves to the teeth / so as to protect ourselves / against the barbarians / living on the other side. / And when the barbarians / born on the other side of the border / invade us, / we do

not hesitate / to kill them / before we have tried / to civilize them. / So we civilized / exterminate barbarians / without civilizing them. / And we persist / in calling ourselves civilized.

The essay continues with an historical discussion of invaders and invaded, and who civilized whom. He concludes with these words, which finally focus the issue of war and peace, as well as social reconstruction, on the crucial question of means.

. . . Lenin and Trotsky / accepted the idea / that the end / justifies the means. / They thought / that an idealistic end / could be reached / by bloody means. / Because they resorted / to bloody means, / Stalin resorts / to bloody means. / The State has not yet / withered away / and the Communist ideal / is still out of sight.

Of Peter Maurin's pacifism Arthur Sheehan wrote:

From his Sillon days, he had demonstrated his opposition to militarism, yet that was actually a negative approach. The positive view which he had thought out in his plans for the Green Revolution was the use of pure means. Christianity could succeed only on Christ's terms: "Do good to those who hate you." "Love your enemy." "I send you as sheep among wolves." War therefore brought no essential change in his attitude. The works of mercy merely had to be extended and practiced on a wider scale.<sup>10</sup>

1. William Miller, A HARSH AND DREADFUL LOVE, p. 158. 2. Arthur Sheehan, PETER MAURIN: GAY BELIEVER, p. 51. 3. Sheehan, p. 59. 4. Miller, p. 27. 5. Sheehan, p. 83. 6. Introduction to THE GREEN REVOLUTION. 7. THE LONG LONELINESS, p. 205. 8. Sheehan, p. 205; 9. Sheehan, p. 198. 10. Ibid.

## Voluntary Poverty: Vision and Path

(Continued from page 7)

tion and injustice. And the Mosaic Law offered legal safeguards for the welfare of the needy—in the year of the Jubilee, for example. This spirit of justice expresses a simple truth: what we have beyond what we need is stolen from the poor. We try to ignore this fact, to modify it; yet seldom do we face it and try to live it. But it remains the truth. The Church Fathers understood it and were faithful to its teaching. St. John Chrysostom wrote unequivocally, "No one is able to become rich without injustice." And Pope Paul remembered this truth in his encyclical *On the Development of Peoples* in quoting St. Ambrose: "You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor man. You are handing over to him what is his. For what has been given in common for the use of all, you have arrogated to yourself. The world is given to all, and not only to the rich." On this point the encyclical adds, "No one is justified in keeping

for his exclusive use what he does not need, when others lack necessities."

To give necessities to the needy is an act of justice, not an act of mercy. Voluntary poverty provides a powerful means of preserving justice without which love is impossible. And as Gustavo Gutierrez writes in *A Theology of Liberation*, "If the ultimate cause of man's exploitation and alienation is selfishness, the deepest reason for voluntary poverty is love of neighbor." In this spirit the early Christian church at Jerusalem held everything in common, not for any ideal of poverty, but for a true love of the poor, so that "there was not a needy person among them" (Acts 4:34).

### Poverty and Peace

The poor man is the man of peace. To seek nonviolence as a way of life is to embrace voluntary poverty as a way of living. They are two sides of the same coin. The more we have, the more we become attached to material things—to jobs, to status, to security—the more we will fear their loss, the more tenaciously we will fight to hold on to them. In 1968 Lyndon Johnson said tellingly to American troops in Korea: "Don't forget. There are two hundred million of us in a world of three billion. They want what we've got, and we're not going to give it to them."

War is indeed the health of the State. With modern economics so deeply involved in the military-industrial complex, voluntary poverty is no longer a choice, but an imperative for the man of peace. Nonviolence includes non-cooperation with the works of war. Voluntary poverty is a call to the works of mercy, which are the works of peace. So we must embrace voluntary poverty and refuse to participate in the workings of war, the defense industries, stocks and bonds, corporate power. We cannot accept the comforts of a society which are manufactured by the exploitation and even the blood of others. And as our taxes pay for war and the weapons of war, we can only lead simple lives in poverty and refuse to pay these war taxes. The 18th century Quaker John Woolman urged his fellow Chris-

tians to "Try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in our possessions." In the search for peace, we must embrace poverty as a way.

### Poverty and Vision

The poor man is the man of vision. This was most certainly true of Peter Maurin. Like St. Francis, Peter embraced "Lady Poverty." Chesterton writes that Francis was Tumbler for Our Lady, and would often see the world standing on his head. He concludes that this perspective was the most accurate worldview. As Francis would think, were it not for the grace of God the



grandest buildings, the largest institutions, the greatest designs of men would only fall into the sky. Francis thus realized his utter dependence on God for his very sustenance. Renouncing all, he expected nothing, and was happy with everything.

Peter Maurin also realized the passing nature of the wealth of the world. To the modern world his vision seems as topsy-turvy as the vision of St. Francis. The wisdom of his slogan "work, not wages" still escapes most unionists and clock punchers. On riches Peter understood that it was not that "you can't take it with you," but rather, "when we die we carry in our clutched hand only what we have given away." Peter taught that it was the poor, the "ambassadors of God," who provided a service to the rich by giving them the "opportunity to

do good" by freeing them from "the shackles of wealth." He was not overlooking the misery of the poor, but simply understood that true revolution liberates the oppressor as well as the oppressed.

In embracing voluntary poverty, Peter was truly a free man. He was free to think, to work, to serve, to envision a new society. In such a society, voluntary poverty would be as natural as the law of gravity. Peter offered a wisdom which very few modern economists could dare imagine: "Everybody would be rich if nobody tried to become richer. And nobody would be poor if everybody tried to be poorest." Gandhi believed that true progress was found in the renunciation, not the accumulation of wealth. This notion, shared by Peter Maurin, is the opposite of the materialist worldviews, both capitalist and communist. Gandhi preached a higher standard of spiritual well-being and insisted that a lower standard of material living was an essential prerequisite. He once remarked that for the poor of the world, God can only come in the form of bread. And it follows that we who embrace voluntary poverty can only see God in the lack of bread. God can only come to us as we empty ourselves. Only in stripping away our possessions can we meet Christ in the service of others. We must become nothing so to be filled with God who is everything.

As we embrace voluntary poverty, we begin "to create a new society within the shell of the old." Voluntary poverty is a witness to this world and a vision of a new world. It is a call to share with the poor, to share both their suffering and the earth's fullness. It is a call to share in justice and to protest the injustice which divides humanity into rich and poor. As we live to love both God and neighbor, we might recall the words of John, the beloved disciple, "If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3: 17-18).

### CATHOLIC WORKER FARM SUMMER PROGRAM JULY 11-22, "THE INTIMATE COMMUNITY"

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By advance registration only. Preference will be given to those staying the entire period. Please indicate if you plan to stay for the entire period (July 11-22), a week, weekend or weekday. Write to CLARE DANIELSSON, BOX 33, TIVOLI, NEW YORK, 12583.



# Fasting: A Fiery and Mysterious Weapon

(Continued from page 3)

itual good? Four examples will provide different insights. One starts, of course, with Mahatma Gandhi. Three other instances are those of Cesar Chavez, Ammon Hennacy, and the group of women, including Dorothy Day, who fasted at the Second Vatican Council.

## Gandhi

Gandhi wrote much about fasting as a weapon in the nonviolent revolution of Satyagraha, Truthforce. His most succinct definition of Satyagraha was "Adherence to truth and insistence upon it by self-suffering." It is obvious that fasting fits into any movement that sees self-suffering as a means to an end. Gandhi termed fasting "a fiery weapon" that must not be utilized without serious reflection and commitment. When he started his history-making fast in 1932, he described himself as entering "the fiery gates."

Fasting, Gandhi pointed out, should only be embarked upon as a last resort, "when all other avenues of redress have been explored and have failed." Fasting can only be resorted to for the good of others. It should not be used against an opponent but rather against those one loves. Defining the one who is in sympathy with you as the lover, Gandhi described how the Satyagrahi fast must

be used. "It should be used against a lover for his reform, not for extorting rights from him." By the word rights, Gandhi explained that he meant personal rights, such as property or money.

While in principle, Gandhi opposed the coercive fast, particularly as directed against an individual, he did not deny that even well-intentioned fasts can be coercive. His famous early fast on behalf of the mill workers of Ahmedabad had its coercive aspect. The mill workers had taken a strike pledge not to return to work until they had won a 35 per cent pay increase. To Gandhi, a pledge was the equivalent of a vow and vows to him were of unutterable importance. Gandhi publicly urged the workers, whose will for the strike was waning, to be faithful to their pledge. Word came to him that one of the workers had complained that starving workers had to walk to the strike meeting while Gandhi could eat good meals and come in a car.

Gandhi's sudden response was, "I cannot for a moment tolerate that you break your pledge. I shall not take any food nor use a car until you get your increase or leave the mill altogether."

As Gandhi's physical strength waned, the strikers were revitalized, the mill owners were moved to greater conces-

sions, and the 35 per cent increase was eventually won.

Other fasts, especially the three-week fast of 1924, when Hindus and Muslims turned to communal rioting and massacre, were fasts of penance for the sins of his Indian people.

The fast in Yeravda Prison in 1932 was a fast of resistance to Britain's plan for separate electoral lists for Untouchables, called by Gandhi, Harijans, or Children of God. Indian society, already suffering gravely from communal separatism, would now see the institutionalizing of separation of the Untouchables. This time Gandhi was ready to resist to death.

"I have decided to resist your decision with my life," Gandhi declared to Britain's Prime Minister. The fast not only deflected the British from their plan but it awakened the conscience of Indians to their own sins of discrimination. Kali's Temple in Calcutta was opened to the harijan community and surprised outcasts, engaged in sweeping Delhi's streets, found caste Hindus coming to share meals with them in public.

Gandhi's last fast, undertaken in Delhi after India's independence, was a response to the despoiling and killing of Muslims in the Delhi area. It was begun

on January 13, 1948, only seventeen days before his assassination. The dreadful partition riots and exchange of peoples between India and Pakistan had made the capital city a vast Hindu refugee camp where passions smouldered and took fire. Gandhi said he would discontinue his fast only when there was a pledge that the Muslim community would be protected from further harm.



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

# The Personalist as Historian

(Continued from page 5)

methodology, who taught the "facts" of history at Harvard and then wondered what it had all added up to. In his *Education*, Adams, in beautiful prose, recounts his fruitless search for meaning in the practice of his profession as an historian and, finally, as he must, he coins his own meaning. Only the Middle Ages had a theory of meaning that fulfilled the requirements of cultural creativity, of community, and of hope for man, he thought. The meaning he saw in the scientism and objectivization of the twentieth century was no meaning—only fragmentation and finally annihilation.

Maurin admired Henry Adams as a thinker. It is too bad, though, that Adams could not have known Maurin, for he achieved a level of synthesis that Adams never reached. Adams made his synthesis out of the linear, time-progress spirit of the age in which he lived. The Middle Ages, so lovely to behold, he thought, beguiled him with its force, but ultimately he professed to be chained to the dogmas of his own time. Science was the only way to reality and that reality, when he got there, was an illusion. So ends Henry Adams; so ends history.

Maurin might have taught him differently, for he rejected the linear procession of events and their comparison as the final basis on which the rich levels of meaning from history were achieved. It was in the realm of the spirit that there could be found a polarization for all of the forces that made for unity as against the fragmenting impact of the cult of facticity and linearity. In the unity of spirit lay the solution to the problem of community—the problem which according to Dostoevsky's *Grand Inquisitor* (how can one avoid Dostoevsky in a Catholic Worker article?) is "the chief misery of every man," and which is certainly one of the fundamental moving forces of history. Adams, who interpreted his history from the principle of linearity, came up with his energy-use curve, predicting that energy would destroy the world in a finite period of time. This would end the dream of the community of all time and of all creation. That Maurin recognized the problem of the community as a common denominator of history is another mark of his genius.

## The "We" of Community

Looking at the linear-time progression of twentieth century history; the in-

crease of fragmentation and the decay of culture; and the dissolution of whatever ancient form had added the substance of grace and beauty to life, the conclusion seems logical that Henry Adams, in one way or another, was right. The great dramas of the twentieth century have been those of massive, bloody, and certainly inhuman attempts to establish community in the face of the inevitable process of cultural and, finally, personal fragmentation implicit in the operation of bourgeois culture—which itself is an aspect of linear history. What were World War I and World War II about except to unleash the forces of a mob action that sought its ecstatic moment in the concept of nationhood? One thinks back to those now seemingly innocent years of the early thirties when Maurin walked the streets around Union Square, thinking and teaching a synthesis to those who would listen—a synthesis that did not end in the "I" of the bourgeois man or the "I" of the man given over completely to flow and sense, but in the "we" of a community that was of all men and subsumed all of time.

Maurin made another point as he taught the few eager students that had gone to the Catholic Worker movement and those clay-faced men and women who sat in the sun at Union Square. It was that those communities which look for their completion only in time require as the most powerful stimulus to their unity a definition of those "others" who stand in hellish array against the satiety of that hunger for togetherness. The "other" has been the Jew, the black man, the white man, the "enemy of the people," or whoever. It made no difference. How many times has the world heard the cry that one more bombing, one more purge, a lynching, a season of gas chambers, will put all aright and thereafter the established community will make its way blissfully through time for all time?

It was no mystic voice that caused Maurin to reject the notion that the turbulences of history could be stilled and community effected through violence or institutional control. Even if eventually the whole cosmos were rigorously analyzed down to its last datum, and in every galaxy and universe gently bleeping computers hidden behind banks of gold and purple clouds were to keep everything in flow with advancing time, humankind would never find an institutional form to lay over it all, even

though an absolute tyranny were created to sustain it. For, in the end, time is the destroyer of every vision of community that makes time its mistress.

## The Goodness of Creation

Perhaps the interpretation of history is, finally, what one chooses to believe about himself and his fellows. Maurin believed in the creativity of the human mind, in the goodness of all creation, and in the reality of community. As an historian, then, his ultimate synthesis had to deal with the problem of time, a problem which could only be resolved by an affirmation of the primacy of the spirit. Yet he was a Catholic, profoundly so in the most important sense of its meaning for contemporary scholarship. He knew that there could be no separation of the life of the spirit from the objective world. Community formation began in time; it began now—not according to time-serving formulas, but immediately with the other person according to the uniqueness and eternality of his being. Community was in the opposite direction of the objectivized impulses of the bourgeois man. It was found in the spirit of the Gospels; it was found in giving and not in acquisitiveness. It began with the person next to you but it had no ending. It was in this redirected view of things, he thought, that the meaning in history could be rediscovered.

Peter, as all of those who lived with him and heard his teaching well knew, saw his communitarian synthesis with such clarity that he joyously ordered his life as a witness to its reality. It was this that made him truly a teacher. He was not disembodied from what he taught. He, himself, in the personal qualities of his life—his voluntary poverty, his non-violence, and the well-thought-through outline of his synthesis in his familiar "Cult, Culture, and Cultivation"—was set apart. In Robert Speaight's fine biography of Georges Bernanos, just published by Liveright, Bernanos is quoted as saying that the truth of the Catholic Church is confirmed only by its saints. Some of us, certainly, can think of Peter Maurin as a contemporary example of what Bernanos was talking about.

When through one man a little more love and goodness, a little more light and truth comes into the world, then that man's life has had meaning.

Alfred Delp

Members of religious committees and even extreme political groups gathered around the frail Mahatma at Birla House and made commitments that all the rights of Muslims would be respected. Gandhi wept, but accepted the pledge and broke his fast to the singing of hymns and the recitation of the prayers of the various religious traditions.

## Cesar Chavez and Ammon Hennacy

A man who learned nonviolence from reading about Gandhi and who has used the fast in a pure and moving form is Cesar Chavez, leader of the United Farm Workers. When his own followers seemed about to destroy the nonviolent character of the grape strike, Chavez began a fast for the purification of the movement. It was at first a private fast but it could not be hidden for long. When asked the reason for his fast, Chavez replied in traditional Christian terminology, employing the term "penance." He chose to fast, he explained, "as an act of penance recalling workers to the non-violent roots of their movement." His fast was ended, as were the fasts of Gandhi, with religious ceremony. In Delano, California, the religious expression was a Mass, attended by thousands of supporters. The fast was actually broken

(Continued on page 11)

## THIRD HOUR PROJECT, 1974-75 St. Benedict and St. Sergius House of Welcome

To be opened soon in New York City or vicinity, as a center of ecumenical encounters of Catholics, Orthodox, Episcopalians, Protestants and all men and women of good-will, with a special emphasis on Eastern Christian culture. There will be a reference library and art exhibits. Theologians, liturgists and sociologists will conduct seminars. A few guest rooms will be available for week-ends or retreats.

Our sponsors to date are Dorothy Day, Rev. Alexander Schmemmann, Rev. John Meyendorff, Fr. Lyle Young, Dr. Robert Terwilliger, Dr. Leonard Swidler, Mrs. Marguerite Harris, Dr. Basil Yanovsky, Helene Iswolsky, and Frances Lanza.

If interested, please write: HELENE ISWOLSKY, BOX 33, TIVOLI, N.Y. 12583.



# + + + LETTERS + + +

## Kansas City

Holy Family House  
908 E. 31st Street  
Kansas City, Mo. 64109

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

I have much news to share with you. Since my last letter in October, asking people to loan or grant us \$100 to help buy a house here in Kansas City, \$11,500 has come in and we have just closed the deal and bought the house. We seem to be living in the midst of miracles, and each day our wonderment of God and people and our deep gratefulness grows more and more.

Within a few weeks we will put out our first newsletter and introduce the neighborhood here to the house and its reasons for existence. I am sure it will take quite awhile before people have faith in us and take our house of hospitality seriously. But, bit by bit we will grow to be a part of each other and realize our family bonds as brothers and sisters.

It looks like the first thing Holy Family House will be used for is a place of hospitality for the relatives and friends of some of the prisoners at Leavenworth. There are presently serious problems at Leavenworth. (See the Newsletter of the Leavenworth Brothers Defense Committee, P.O. Box 5818, Kansas City, Mo. 64111.) Letters to the Warden and prayers to God are badly needed. Hopefully our children's drop in center will get going soon. Much clothing has been donated to us and a whole houseful of furniture. God, through his people, truly does provide.

Karl Meyer sent us what is perhaps our greatest treasure — a plaque of the Holy Family which once hung in St. Stephen's House in Chicago. A dear friend, Paul of Jesus, is painting an icon for us and a sign for the front of the house. There are so many good things happening. "God has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed." Today especially because a stove was donated.

We ask your prayers to help us make this house into a true place of hospitality for those who come to us. And we offer prayers of thanks for everyone who has helped us get started and to everyone who will help us in the future.

In peace,  
Angie O'Gorman Calvert

## Los Angeles

Ammon Hennacy House  
605 N. Cummings St.  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90031

Dear Friends,

Easter is a very special celebration for us because it marks the beginning of our fifth year. The last four years have been very fruitful, and tumultuous years. The weeds that have over run our back yard garden will soon be cut down, and the garden planted again with squash and corn, tomatoes and lettuce to help feed ourselves and the men who come to our kitchen, almost 600 a day.

The lenten season found our bank account short almost \$600. The loss was the result of a series of rather skillful forgeries. Added to this is the fact that the prices of all basic commodities, around which we once planned our meals, continue to skyrocket. A year ago we paid \$12 for a hundred pounds of beans and \$10 for rice. Now beans cost \$68 for a hundred pounds and rice \$36. The end is not in sight, and the prices seem to rise almost daily. We quite literally cannot afford to buy anything for the kitchen except coffee, sugar and tomato paste. Most of the food that we cook must be begged from local wholesale produce and meat markets from which we are able, with a great deal of imagination, to concoct some rather tasty and nourishing stews. Please help if you can.

It makes me very happy to tell you

that on February 19, Catherine Morris and I were married. The decision to marry was not an easy one to reach because as many of you know, Catherine was a member of a religious congregation, the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Because her years in the society were fulfilling and joyful ones, we intend to maintain the relationship by becoming part of their associate program. It is our hope that the strength derived from our love can be utilized in a life of service to others. We will continue working and living at the House of Hospitality as long as it seems fruitful for ourselves



Ade Bethune

and the Community. We ask your prayers for strength in this endeavor. It will not be easy. But with God's help and your support it can be done.

In the Risen Christ,  
Jeff Dietrich

## Quebec

St. Joseph Farm  
Ripon, Quebec

Dear Dorothy,

We came back from Montreal late last night after bringing the April *Unity* to the printer. We arrived to find that Catherine, the cat, had opened the kitchen door and neglected to close it and so caused the death of a half-dozen plants in the kitchen and froze the pipes. In the barn Don, the workhorse, got loose from her box stall, got her mane caught in an electrical outlet, causing a short circuit, blowing the fuse, allowing the water pipe to freeze and causing it to burst. No wonder we seldom visit the city!

We're working now to bring out our own paper from the farm—called the *Catholic Family Farmer* — bimonthly starting in May. We boldly announce it as a newspaper of the Catholic Worker movement. Mindful of our weakness, we ask your prayers.

We want to print an "Easy Essay" in French as well as English in each issue and wondered if Peter ever wrote in French? If not, could we translate? I'm anxious to spread Peter's teachings around rural Quebec where a recent and insidious spirit of acquisition has done much to destroy the Catholic traditions of community and natural personalism.

Your fellow worker in Christ,  
Jim Creskey

## Boston

Haley House  
23 Dartmouth Street  
Boston, Mass. 02116

Dear Dorothy,

Please excuse the delay in acknowledging (and thanking you for) the generous check. We have had much enjoyment deciding which malady we will repair. Looks like the wiring wins. We intend to share part of it with "Rosie's Place." This is the name we've chosen for the women's house (storefront), in

hopes of keeping the place casual enough to make the women feel at home. Several large adjoining storefronts have been made available to us (substantially larger than Haley House), and we plan to open Easter Sunday. That means putting a pot of coffee on and beginning the clean up. As we get the place in order, the women will be discovering us.

Tomorrow we begin the first formal "clarification of thought" evening. They have often occurred spontaneously, but our supporters have repeatedly expressed interest in participating. Hope your house for women will progress rapidly through all the red tape and maze of regulations.

We are considering approaching some monks interested in farming to plant and harvest a few acres of vegetables for us. It would be a substantial donation. They can maintain their contemplative life and still participate in our meagre efforts.

Peace and hope,  
Kathie McKenna

## Portland

Ammon Hennacy House  
1225 S.E. Oak  
Portland, Oregon 97214

Dear Friends at the CW,

It was last spring that we first wrote you to say out loud (at long last!) our desire to open a Catholic Worker House in Portland. We now have a house with room to share which we call Ammon Hennacy House since Patrick spent a few days with Ammon in '67. Ammon's friends here in Portland think he would be pleased.

Portland is in the throes of what can only be called "skid-row chic," with the U.S. Bank and other corporations joining hands with a group of hip entrepreneurs to help the city "plan" the Burnside (skid-row) neighborhood. The land is relatively cheap, and, as usual, the poor are expendable, although there are a couple of agencies fighting for the people. Patrick worked with one of these during the time we were waiting Daniel's birth, but found there is little room for a personalist anarchism (no matter how pacifist) within any established program. And although we love and wish well the tireless workers in the Burnside area, we find that once again only manual labor affords us the freedom to share our many blessings, not only with the displaced poor of the Burnside, but with whomever comes to our door.

This note is to let you know we exist as a Catholic Worker House and are open (we pray) to all and everything God sends our way; and that we draw strength from the CW movement in all its forms everywhere. Please pray for us.

Thank you,  
Patrick and Mufti McNassar

## Schenectady

Mount Carmel House  
535 Schenectady St.  
Schenectady, N. Y. 12307

Dear Fellow Workers:

All of us at Mt. Carmel House send greetings. We are a highly changing community of around thirty-five men, women, and children, who try to live the New Society in a slightly renovated church. A core of four (that changes from time to time, too) and volunteers from the community, together with men and women who come to us from the streets, serve three meals a day, provide food for needy families, center one of the vigorous up-state CALC chapters, offer Mass every day, clothe many, shelter more overnight, hold weekly roundtable discussions, and live a life together of voluntary poverty.

Mt. Carmel House, a little flicker in "the city that lights the world," has grown, despite the energy crisis, and the love of Christ generated by the people

(from one to eighty-three years) who find a home in this noisy building rivals in power and brightness the massive GE works at the foot of our hill.

We are hard at work trying to heighten GE's consciousness of its corporate responsibility, and the County Welfare Department's responsibility to the poor and dispossessed. It seems to us that institutional responsiveness is at an all-time low. But we strengthen each other with the Light of Christ that is in us.

We are happy to send our little journal "The Mount Carmel Light" to anyone who asks, and would be delighted to have all of you as visitors.

Dennis Wienk

## San Jose

1706 Homestead Rd.  
Santa Clara, Cal. 95050

Dear Pat,

Thanks for your communications in the past. I am presently involved in a program in San Jose which feeds street people or anyone else in need at St. James Park. Things are going really well for us. We feed approximately 40 persons per day including ourselves, which number only 3. When I started it was difficult for me to put my complete trust in God that the food would be provided, but the people at the local produce markets have been just great and sure enough just when food is running out we get more than we need.

As things come together I would like to start having Friday night get-togethers so that we can become more familiar with Peter Maurin and some of the other ideas of the Worker.

I hope that all is well in N.Y. and that the Spirit of Love is keeping all going well.

Viva la Causa,  
Peter J. Conk

Hi —

Have returned from seven-year exile in Canada to find the C.W. still coming in the mail—it means a lot.

Thanks,  
A Returnee

## 36 East First

Continued from page 2)

22nd, right in the middle of Lent. Fr. John Giuliani, and Sisters Patty Degnan and Evelyn Evoglia came from Sacred Heart College in Bridgeport, Conn. for an evening of Contemporary Sacred Song. For almost two hours they played guitar and sang the Gospel with joy and fervor and gentleness. James Teecar beat the rhythm and before the evening was over almost everyone was singing along.

Towards the end of the meeting a woman arrived with four bags and no place to stay. She was seriously disturbed and felt her life was in danger. The third floor was full; the Women's Shelter was full. When I told her of the predicament, she simply refused to move, and, rightfully so. She had been shifted through three "sources" that day to end up at the Worker at 10 P.M., exhausted and angry. The shifting had to stop somewhere. So we found her a place to stay and I thought of the postscript to *The Long Loneliness*. It tells how the Worker came to be: "We were just sitting there talking when people moved in on us. Some moved out and that made room for more. And somehow the walls expanded . . . It just came about. It just happened." And how it manages to go on through the craziness: "The most significant thing is community. . . We know Him in the breaking of the bread, and we know each other in the breaking of the bread, and we are not alone anymore. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship." As we celebrate our 41st birthday we thank God for letting it just happen and we pray He will let it go on!



# FASTING

(Continued from page 9)

with the reception of the host in communion. Those of us who have joined the picket lines in California and have seen the provocation to violence visited on the grape and lettuce strikers, realize how religious ceremonies and a constantly clarified religious base have contributed to the maintenance of nonviolence.

Many in the peace movement know of the long yearly fasts of Ammon Hennacy, the one-man revolution, to use his self-description. Every year following the discharge of the atomic bomb over Hiroshima, Ammon went on a water fast. The fast lasted one day for every year after the dropping of the bomb. During the 1950's and early 1960's when Ammon was at the New York Catholic Worker, he would march during his fast in front of the office of the Internal Revenue Service. His placard reminded passersby that their taxes had produced the bomb that vaporized hundreds of thousands of civilians at Hiroshima. Despite the heat of July and August, Ammon never faltered in his pilgrimage over New York's pitilessly steaming pavements. His act had an exquisitely Christian character in that Ammon, a pacifist, was taking on himself the guilt of his fellow-citizens. He was accepting penance and expiation for an unspeakable wrong in which he had had no part. He had himself opposed all the wars of his time and had been put in solitary confinement for resistance to one of them.

Ammon followed a fasting program the year round. He fasted from food every Friday, from sundown Thursday to sundown Friday evening. It was on Fridays that he sold the *Catholic Worker* near Grand Central Station. There I used to meet him at midday and we would have our lunch, he a cup of weak tea, and I some solid food. Some of us find that continuing Ammon's Friday Fast is a small way to share the sufferings of those whose hunger is not voluntary and who live perpetually on the very edge of starvation.

## Fasting For and With the World's Bishops

One of the most deeply Christian and most dramatic fasts in recent religious history was that of eighteen women during the last session of the Second Vatican Council in Rome. It was organized by Lanza del Vasto (named Shantidas, Servant of Peace by Gandhi during a pilgrimage to India) and included women from a dozen different countries. Dorothy Day was asked to join the group. I remember with what relish Dorothy drank her last cup of aromatic Roman coffee before she went to the Cenacle Retreat House to live with the fasters. Their aim was to fast with the Fathers of the Council, who, in the last session, would be formulating their peace statement. The world's bishops had spent only one hour in opening the debate on peace at the third session of the Vatican Council, and the tone of some of the interventions had been ominous. Two American and two English bishops had begun the argumentation against any condemnation of the bomb and one had indicated how atomic bombs could be used morally (against ballistic missiles in the outer atmosphere). An American lay group had circulated a statement asserting that nuclear weapons were necessary to the defense of the free world and that any condemnation of them would have the effect of hurting only one side, the side of the west.

During that first hour, when peace broke out at the Vatican Council, one fearless voice had been raised for the banning of the bomb. It was that of His Beatitude, Patriarch Maximos of Jerusalem and Antioch.

"Venerable Fathers," he began, "A threat of destruction hangs over humanity, nuclear armament. All mankind is waiting breathlessly, with haggard countenance, to see what we are going to do. . . We must speak out boldly and . . . let it go!"

courageously, like John the Baptist before Herod, or Ambrose before Theodosius, to condemn the use of these infernal weapons."

Some of us went to see the aged Patriarch during the fast. His Secretary became alarmed when he heard that Dorothy Day, then sixty-eight years of age, was on a fast. The Patriarch wanted to know what Dorothy took and we answered, "Only water."

The old man had a distant look in his dark eyes. There was a faint smile on his face as he said something which had special meaning for those who knew desert and drought. "L'eau nourrit," "Water nourishes," was his comment.

It was hoped that at least two-thirds of the world's bishops would join with the Patriarch of Jerusalem, but there was fear that American and European bishops would weaken a clear position. The women continued with the water fast for ten days, praying for light for the Council Fathers, praying in love and concern. During the fast, talk of peace filled the Basilica where over two thousand bishops were nearing a decision. The debate came to a head on the same day that Pope Paul made the "No More War-War Never Again" speech at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. After that day's debate, a woman peace leader from England, who attended council sessions as a journalist, came out of the Basilica with tears of joy streaming down her cheeks. Besides condemning indiscriminate weaponry, it seemed certain that the final draft of "The Church in the Modern World" would contain support for the witness of nonviolence and for the right of conscientious objection. Two English bishops had changed sides to join the peace forces and two American bishops, spokesmen for nuclear deterrence, had been called back to the United States and were therefore not part of the debate.

Who knows what spiritual connection there might be between the women who afflicted themselves out of love for the Fathers of the Council—who focussed their prayers on them? I am inclined to agree with Gandhi who said that, "All spiritual fasts always influence those who come within the zone of their influence."

## Innocent Suffering—Jesus and Gandhi

Gandhi saw fasting in the context of innocent suffering. His whole movement of Satyagraha, Truthforce, he asserted again and again, "is based on an implicit belief in the absolute efficiency of innocent suffering." This concept converges with the Christian belief in the absolute efficiency of Christ's innocent suffering to atone for the sins of humankind.

Not only Christ's, but all innocent suffering, is redemptive. In fact, innocent suffering becomes the very engine of the world, the driving creative force leading to life even from the grave. It takes the sign of the absurd from the massive, unexplained pall of suffering that hangs over the world. To choose fasting is to join oneself with the innocent suffering of Christ, to partake of His method. It is a fiery and mysterious weapon, but one that will hurt no one. Fasting can be united with prayer of supplication; it can be a way of penance or expiation or a means of subduing passions; it can goad consciences into ceasing evil-doing or righting wrongs; it can be a weapon of nonviolent resistance; it can partake of Christ's redemptive suffering—and at times it can be all of these at once.

To return to the young priest who decided to fast to the end that the Archdiocese of Washington would commit large amounts of money for the poor. As his fast wore on, he softened the coercive aspect of it so that it became less of a hunger-strike.

"I continue with my fast," he stated, "plagued by much self-doubt, praying for direction and sustaining grace. Somehow, I must continue." He dropped his

# Notes & Commentary

## MONKS FAST FOR FREEDOM

On March 1st, three hundred Vietnamese Buddhist monks, imprisoned at Chi Hoa Detention Center, began a water only fast in silence and prayer. They are refusing all food until they are released or dead. Twelve days later, 142 more monks were arrested, and started fasting upon their imprisonment. One fasting monk, Thich Nguyen Van Chu, is known dead, and probably many others have suffered the same fate. The fast continues.

The true issue is: Why should such risks be taken? First, for these monks a renunciation of violence or support of violence is a religious vow. Ultimately, the practice of this vow, a refusal to fight for or support either side in the Vietnam conflict, resulted in their imprisonment. Instead of fighting, the monks were active in community social work: caring for war orphans and refugees, educating poor children, teaching them to act with compassion, wisdom and courage (a Buddhist teaching which gives the moral base upon which to rebuild a broken culture), reconciling embattled brothers and building a peaceful society.

The Vietnamese monks are making this extraordinary sacrifice of their lives to challenge the world to respond. Some Americans have chosen to fast for a day or a week, in unity with the captives of war, others have been moved to civil disobedience.

insistence on the money commitment thus eliminating the binding of other wills to his own. Instead, he asked for an opening of the financial books of the Archdiocese to lay people. In this way, they could know more about available assets, and then work to give the poor a just priority. As providence would have it, an announcement came during the course of his fast that the Archdiocese was acquiring a private residence for the Archbishop. The cost was \$525,000. If the fast accomplished nothing more than to give the Archbishop qualms about the rightness of such a purchase, it would have reached a positive resolution.

## STING NETTLE



Ade Bethune

The Washington fast action, extreme in its first announcements, had the useful result of raising some basic questions about fasting. We could all ask ourselves how fasting could be integrated into our own lives, in the face of so many evils, of which poverty is the most pressing. Besides the grinding and debasing poverty of our own land, there is the heart-stopping fact of mass death by starvation in drought-scoured Africa, the long-term agony of hunger in India and the tragic fate of Vietnam's orphans and homeless refugees. If each of us took up Ammon Hennacy's Friday Fast and gave the saving to the poor at home and overseas, the present stream of Catholic aid could soon become rivers of mercy.

For Africa's drought victims and aid to 70 overseas areas: Catholic Relief Services, 1011 First Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

For the needy in America: Campaign for Human Development, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Place. This is the name we've chosen for the women's house (station), in

American dollars continue to pay for 85% of the maintenance of the South Vietnamese Prison System. Write your congressman, tell him about those imprisoned with your tax money, and how you think your money should be better used. Write to Mr. Re Cong Chat, Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Vietnam, Tu Do Street, Saigon 1, South Vietnam, demanding the release of all political prisoners. Inform your friends about the monks, their sacrifice, and American involvement. Demand life!

Lee Le Cuyet

## SOSTRE APPEAL DENIED, SEEK NEW APPEAL

Federal Judge John T. Curtin has refused (after a 9-month delay) to overturn the 1968 conviction of Martin Sostre, and denied Sostre a new trial. In a 23-page decision given on March 15, Judge Curtin said he did not believe the recanted testimony of Arto Williams, chief prosecution witness in Sostre's 1968 trial, who in 1971 signed an affidavit admitting he had lied during Sostre's trial. The Court has thus accepted and refused the testimony of the same man, accepting it when it wished to convict Sostre, refusing it when it wished to deny him a new trial. Such are the two standards of "justice." We must pray for Judge Curtin and for Martin Sostre. Sostre remains in jail with a 31-year sentence, the victim of perjured evidence.

In a related matter, an affidavit in which Sostre's fellow prisoner at Clinton Prison, Joseph Sullivan, swore that he heard guards conspire in May, 1973, to brutally beat Sostre and then actually did (evidence that might clear Sostre of charges of assault against prison guards), was delayed for more than four months in its delivery to Sostre. Prison officials offered no explanation for the delay, but such seems to be common practice.

Now the Martin Sostre Defense Committee desperately needs funds to appeal again for a new trial of the original charges, this time to the U.S. Court of Appeals, and to defend Sostre against the most recent State allegations. Please send whatever you can to the MARTIN SOSTRE DEFENSE COMMITTEE, Box 839 — Ellicott Station, Buffalo, N.Y. 14205. And please write Peter Preiser, New York State Commissioner of Corrections, Albany, N.Y., calling for Martin Sostre's release.

Pat Jordan

## LABOR UNION WOMEN

On March 23-24, 3300 women attended a convention in Chicago to form the first national coalition of working women. A major concern to the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) is that while women comprise 43% of the national work force, only 8% are union members. The CLUW recognizes the often desperate conditions under which women work, conditions especially difficult for minority women. In a "statement of purpose" the CLUW cited these main objectives: 1- initiation and encouragement of unionism among unorganized and/or minority women; 2- participation in union, local, and national political processes to insure better working conditions, livable wages, improved health and pension benefits, childcare legislation, and final ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment; and 3- a greater participation by women in all levels of union activity.

In a United Farm Workers Union-Teamster debate on a structural proposal, the CLUW showed its overwhelming support for the UFW. However, a UFW effort to win a resolution supporting the ongoing lettuce and grape boycott never came to a vote. Specific structure and concrete actions remain to be worked out in committee, but the CLUW is on its way to becoming a long needed voice for the rights of working women.

Anne Marie Fraser  
If I were the very happy to tell you  
the name we've chosen for the women's house (station), in



# Work Is "Love Made Visible"

(Continued from page 7)

800 times a day! Peter Kropotkin, who had a lasting effect on Peter Maurin, had this to say of such work: "Overwork is repulsive to human nature, not work. Overwork for supplying the few with luxury, not work for the well-being of all. Work, labor, is a physiological necessity, a necessity of spending accumulated bodily energy, a necessity which is health and life itself" (Essay on "Anarchist Communism").

Peter Maurin wished people to work four hours at manual labor a day and four hours at study. The rest of the waking hours could be spent at craft work, round-table discussions, and the building of community. Peter also noted the importance of singing at work, for singing fosters the tempo, leisure, and beauty of human activity. The songs of the workshop, the chantey of the sailors, the singing of psalms in the fields by medieval peasants, all these gave an industrial value which is lost in the noise of modern-day factories. Song is also important because, as Peter pointed out concerning the medieval peasants, "That is how they related all things to God."

Finally, Peter noted that individuals have lost the value of their work because they have confused trading with making, have confused commerce for the task which is well done and rewarding in itself. "He [the worker] must see to it that the things he makes are fit to use rather than to sell. He must take pride in work well done, and . . . must realize that labor is related to thought and thought is a spiritual faculty, not a commodity."

## The Social Arena

The second realm of the human endeavor is the communal or social. As if the personal level is not complicated enough, the social is even more so. And Peter used to say that the spiritual is the most difficult of all.

The social is complex because it compounds the complexities of all the individuals involved, giving to the social process something of the character of geometric multiplication, or perhaps atomic fission. As certain philosophers point out, one is not a person unless one is in relationship with others. And even the hermit's vocation is seen by the Church as a vocation in and for the whole Church. Work has always been a means of in-

clusion among peoples. The Catholic Worker is a "community of work," the community resulting and growing from the shared tasks which are undertaken. The desire for sharing in great tasks which require great deals of human ingenuity and energy is almost metaphysical to man. This is one of the reasons so often men have been drawn into making wars. Modern war is an all-out effort on the part of a whole nation or society to achieve a particular victory. Our task remains to channel such productive energy into creative (not destructive) activities, into nonviolent campaigns for social revolution.

The social nature of the person has



Ade Bethune

been severely hampered in its goal of "creating a society in which it will be easier to be good" (Maurin) by modern class structures and the inherent competition and inequality they spawn. A friend recently wrote of his work in a Chicago factory: "I was reading *The Diary of a Country Priest*, and it just happened to mention *Rerum Novarum*, and the fact that labor is not a commodity. Well, I was thinking about that while working in the factory, and I became quite class conscious. I began noticing the different levels that people were on. First of all there were the day labor workers, the regular employees, the foremen, the section bosses, the plant managers, and the executives. You do progressively less work as you move up the ladder, and you are paid more for it, too."

That such a status quo is desirable to many, even the well-intentioned, we should have no doubts. Every privileged group seeks to safeguard its status by various educational and/or licensing restrictions (professionalism).

Julius Nyerere, the President of Tanzania, has stated that the purpose of Tanzanian socialism is man. In an effort to replace the old residual class structure of colonialism in Tanzania with the sense of service for the people, Nyerere has gone into the villages and worked with pick and shovel himself. He has encouraged government officials and students to do the same. Of course, he has met with no small degree of resistance. Status divests itself with little haste and cheerfulness. Yet there has been some progress, particularly in the villages. Nyerere equates independence and self-reliance, and sees freedom for people in their ability "to stand on their own two feet."

Thus, the societal problem we face has to do with responsibility. Mechanization, largeness, the bureaucratic cloud which engulfs our paper culture, these have made of us a puppet population which has lost all sense of responsibility for the work it does. Worse, says Eric Gill, we no longer desire to regain such responsibility! (Cf.: *Beauty Looks After Herself*.)

Peter Maurin called for such a reclamation of responsibility. He said that the best kind of government is self-government. He encouraged this, and wrote further: "Fire the boss / and be your own boss / is a good slogan / for the worker."

To build a society based on co-operation rather than conflict, on just distribution of goods rather than greed, a functional society rather than an acquisitive society, this is what Peter proposed. Such a society is not based on the interests of usury, expediency or manufacture, but on the protection and betterment of the standard of life of each worker. John Papworth calls it the "Economics of Non-Violence": "If man wants an alternative to the forms of economic life that now affect and oppress him, he must surely begin by insisting on a scale of organization small enough to enable his moral insights to play their full part in its workings."

While Papworth, E. F. Schumacher and other economists are calling for a return to structures organized on smaller scales, today still another problem faces the social nature of work. This is the enshrined, awesome status of the machine. Mumford agrees with Papworth when he declares, "To save technics itself we shall have to place limits on its hitherto unqualified expansion" (*In the Name of Sanity*).

While the sort of mammoth mechanization which has turned human work into a wasteland and polluted the earth must be checked (even reversed), doing away with all machinery is both impossible and undesirable. E. F. Schumacher, mentioned above, has called for the creation of intermediate forms of technology. He says that for every activity there is an appropriate scale (cf.: *Small Is Beautiful*), and gives examples of factories which are trying to get away from the assembly line by creating small workshops within big factories. (He lists the Philips Electronics plant in Holland and the Volvo auto company in Sweden.)

## The Hardest Realm

The most formidable effort of work remains to be exerted on the third realm of human nature, the spiritual. This is the deepest and most complex level of our existence, the natural resource we have least developed, the circle most often neglected.

That work applies to the spirit and the spirit to work can be seen in two of the classic religious Rules which influenced Peter Maurin's thinking, those of St. Benedict and St. Francis. Both speak of the right relationships of prayer to work (St. Benedict's *Ora et Labora*), and the necessity of daily labor. Francis dedicates the fifth chapter of his Rule to work, and, we are told, dismissed one of the lazy friars as "Brother Fly."

In the classic sense of these Rules, the discipline of work is seen as prerequisite in creating the order and openness necessary for growth in the spiritual life. Such discipline is needed in human relations as well, for often friendship and close proximity call for disciplined forbearance. Cesar Chavez has said that walking the picket line as an exercise, hour after hour, day to week to month after month, is the greatest teacher of nonviolence. This relates to the discipline, the silence, the co-ordinated effort, the meditation such a protracted experience entails, and suggests the spiritual power of nonviolence as well.

That the spiritual realm is related to the social is suggested by the words of Fr. Zossima in *The Brothers Karamazov*: that the work of each person contributes to the salvation of the whole world. That is why the "little way" of St. Therese has borne such a harvest for countless men and women, and for the Church as a whole. St. Therese was aware that, "The one inexhaustible school of mortification is work. Every ordinary task of the day must be done precisely, as conscientiously, as composedly and faultlessly, as the strength of body and soul permits: without haste, without hesitation, without carelessness, without negligence. Anyone who has tried to do this knows well that such punctiliousness can be true penance" (Ida F. Gorres, *The Hidden Face*). It was through her work, seemingly inconspicuous to all who lived with her, that she rose to the heights of great sanctity, and in so doing, uplifted the level of the whole Church.

## A New Society

"The future will be different if the present is different," Peter Maurin was fond of repeating. I have found much excitement recently in reading similar thoughts in the work of Lewis Mumford.

Mumford should give great encouragement to those who seek to reconcile their work and the human purpose. He emphasizes, as did Peter Maurin, the necessity of each person cultivating various interests and activities simply to maintain one's psychological and ecological balance. He has a love of freedom associated with anarchists, and encourages workers to debunk their vocational pigeon-holes. Mumford says these should become increasingly meaningless as the "Vocation of Man" becomes the focus of our activity. He suggests that people develop multiple occupations, as have a number of people at the Catholic Worker. One woman not only assists at one of our houses of hospitality, she works and goes to school as well. Others give freely of their time by settling to work fewer hours at their own jobs.

All this changing of roles has a good purpose, says Mumford, for it leads to a diversification of human development, a deepening of the reservoir of experience, and an intensification of life. All this clarifies his dictum quoted before: "There is no substitute for work except other serious work."

What is this work for, and how can it be accomplished in a society which seeks to make its members conform more totally with each passing moon to its own dehumanizing purposes? Once again, Mumford has some suggestions akin to Peter Maurin. Let me end with these, as they are indeed hopeful, and shed light on the prophetic nature of Peter Maurin and his work:

"But for those of us who have thrown off the myth of the machine, the next move is ours. . . ."

"Each one of us, as long as our life stirs in him, may play a part in extricating himself from the power system by asserting his primacy as a person in quiet acts of mental or physical withdrawal. . . . Though no immediate and complete escape from the ongoing power system is possible, least of all through mass violence, the changes that will restore autonomy and initiative to the human person all lie within the province of each individual soul, once it is aroused."

"The changes that have so far been effective, and that give promise to further successes, are those that have been initiated by animated individual minds, small groups, and local communities nibbling at the edges of the power structure by breaking routines and defying regulations. Such an attack seeks, not to capture the citadel of power, but to withdraw from it and quietly paralyze it. Once such initiatives become widespread, as they at last show signs of becoming, it will restore power and confident authority to its proper source: the human personality and the small face-to-face community." (*The Pentagon of Power*.)

## Friday Night Meetings

In accordance with Peter Maurin's desire for clarification of thought, the Catholic Worker holds meetings every Friday night at 8:30 p.m. at St. Joseph's House, 36 E. 1st St., between First and Second Avenues. After the discussions, we continue to talk over hot sassafras tea. Everyone is welcome.

May 10 — Fr. Avery Dulles, S.J.: *Jesus Today*.

May 17 — Fritz Eichenberg: *Still the Eternal City*.

May 24 — Carmen Mathews reading from Dylan Thomas' "Under Milk Wood."

May 31 — Paul Avrich: *Solzhenitsyn and Christian Anarchism*.

June 7 — Igal Roodenko and Eileen Egan: *Gandhi and Practical Nonviolence Today*.

June 14 — Fr. Thomas Berry: *The Dream Quest of the American Indian, Part II*. Includes the film "Tshi in Two Worlds."

June 21 — Sidney Callahan: *Anger and the Women's Movement*.

June 28 — Pastor Richard Neuhaus: *The Politics of World Hunger*.

## PETER MAURIN MASS

On Wednesday evening, May 15th at 8 p.m., a Mass honoring Peter Maurin on the 25th Anniversary of his death will be celebrated at St. Joseph's House. You are all invited to join with us in the Liturgy and afterward for Stanley Vishniewski's slide show of Peter and the Catholic Worker.