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# CATHOLIC WORKER

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## Interview with a Veteran

Benny Wilkerson enlisted in the United States Navy at age twenty-one, and served for four years active duty. The following discussion between him and Lou Ann Merkel, the Youth Outreach Program Coordinator for the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, took place in October 1986.

**LOU ANN MERKLE:** Why did you enlist?

**BENNY WILKERSON:** I was taking after my father. He was in the Army for thirty-five years. I never really got to know him—he traveled a lot. I guess I wanted to see what he saw. So I did it for travel. But after I got in there, it wasn't all it was cracked up to be. It was more involved than that. I saw a lot of ugly things, things they don't advertise, things they don't tell you in the brochures. They tell you things like, "Sure, we can guarantee you this. We can give you any duty station you want. You can get guaranteed schooling. You can get a nine-to-five job, come home, wash up, go to bed." You know, they make it sound so simple. You get in there, it's do this, do that. You might have to pull twelve hours working on, twelve hours off, go to places you never dreamed of. I ain't talkin' about Hawaii and Guam and places like that. I'm talkin' about Lebanon, Grenada, Iran, Iraq. You know, places with violence. You see a lot of military abuse. People jumping off of boats because they can't take the stress. Just a lot of things you weren't really prepared for.

**LAM:** What kinds of things would drive somebody to jump off a boat?

**BW:** There was this one incident at the Air Force Base in Athens, Greece. They were protestin' something about the military. And a lot of people off of our boat got hurt. People went back to the boat thinkin' about it, saying, "This isn't what I came in here for, you know." And that wasn't the first incident. And after so many times of that happening—you know, people taking it out on you just because you are a symbol of the United States—you get to thinking, "Is this a good cause, what I'm doin'?" Obviously if these people feel like this, we can't be that good...

**LAM:** You say you saw a lot of ugly things; what do you mean?

**BW:** Well, besides people jumpin' off the boat, which is bad enough itself.... We lost three people after all the incidents. They died. As my legal officer said: "They just couldn't take it. They weren't man enough to deal with the problems out there." I guess they were just tired, just really fed up with what was going on. Most of the people are fresh out of high school. So you have a lot of young kids. They're not really into politics, or really into the military and what's goin' on. And the way they handle themselves is to try to keep their minds off of what's really goin' on. And what's really goin' on is: games. Sittin' there playin' games, head games, with these Russians or with anybody, it doesn't matter. Then the military just gives you

(Continued on page 7)



## WORKER

## Guatemala: A Refugee's Story

By CAROL WINTLE

Fourteen-year-old Marta Ixcot arrived in the United States in 1984, knowing not a word of English. Now she speaks it perfectly. When Marta was eight years old, difficult and dangerous conditions in her Guatemalan village forced her to leave

home and work as a maid and live-in babysitter. Now she is a refugee: her family fled from soldiers who threatened to murder them. "If we stayed in Guatemala — we would have been killed" states Marta. "Many people in my village were murdered."

In Marta's village and throughout

Guatemala, nearly everyone is poor: over a third of the people are unemployed. Peasants work from sunrise to sunset for only thirty dollars a month. They live in huts made of straw and mud with no electricity or indoor plumbing. Many villagers don't make enough to feed their families and eight percent of the children die from hunger and lack of medical care. This is what life in Guatemala has been like for hundreds of years.

Most Guatemalans have no schooling and cannot read or write. In Marta's village and many places like it, more than eighty percent of the people are illiterate. Marta's father Felipe, a farm worker, and mother Elena, a weaver, were more fortunate — they attended a few years of school. Felipe and Elena shared their knowledge by teaching others at night how to read and write.

To help improve conditions in their village, Felipe and seventeen other peasants formed a group called Desarrollo Para La Comunidad which means The Development of the Community. They brought young and old together to discuss problems and find solutions. The villagers made tables and benches so they would not have to eat off the floor, found a market for the products they grew and made, built outhouses and small bridges and transformed footpaths into roads that cars and trucks could use. In Guatemala, to form such an organization is dangerous. Others had been killed for trying to educate themselves, assert their rights, and improve conditions.

"Many sad and scary things started to happen in our village" explains Marta. "One day soldiers set our home on fire and everything burned. It was awful. We then moved in with my grandmother." Soon afterwards, men with machine guns arrived at the village in government trucks. They kidnapped several men from the community group. The next day the tortured bodies of the men were found outside the village. "Then my uncle was told to come to the military base," Marta states. "A few days later, soldiers brought his body back in a coffin. They said he had been killed by unknown assailants."

These occurrences are not unique to Marta's village. Over 105,000 Guatemalans have been murdered in the last twenty-two years. Forty thousand more have been kidnapped and never seen again. The Guatemalan army is responsible for the killings, reports Amnesty International, a world-renowned human rights organization.

In Marta's village, seventeen of the eighteen men who started the Development for the Community group were eventually killed. Marta's father alone escaped. He left the village and found work wherever he could, communicating secretly to Elena for three years.

Then one night one hundred soldiers surrounded the house where Marta's family and relatives slept. They burst into the hut; pushed, kicked, scratched, hit with their guns and pulled the hair of Marta's aunt. The soldiers picked up the woman's two-month-old baby and swung it around by its arms, throwing it back on the bed. They pointed their machine guns at the women and demanded to know where the men were. Marta's terri-

(Continued on page 6)



The Transfiguration

Gary Donatelli

## In Hiroshima

## More than Survivors

**IN THE AUTUMN WIND.** By Dorothy Stroup. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987. 437 pages, \$19.95. Reviewed by Rachelle Linner.

Each year, tens of thousands of people visit Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park, absorbing the starkness of the museum exhibits, walking amid the monuments on the land that was once the hypocenter of *Gembaku*, the atom bomb. Some of those visitors, many school children among them, have the opportunity to listen to *hibakusha* tell their stories of August 6, 1945, and the years that were indelibly changed because of where they were that morning. (*Hibakusha* is the Japanese word used for survivors of the atom bomb.) *Hibakusha* have accepted a self-imposed obligation to be witnesses and teachers; yet, because of the barriers

of language and the burdens of history, many Americans have not listened to them. As evidenced by this beautiful, affecting novel one knows that Dorothy Stroup is one American who has listened to *hibakusha*, listened with her heart as well as with her mind.

Dorothy Stroup recently observed that "...we are all tired of photographs of mutilated, charred and dehumanized creatures lying helplessly on infirmary mats. We cannot imagine, looking at them, that THOSE people are human beings like ourselves." That human kinship is at the heart of this book, in the woman Chiyo Hara, its central figure. In *The Autumn Wind* tells a story of one family's war-time tragedy, its grief and rebirth, a story that is "fictional," but based on Dorothy Stroup's extensive re-

(Continued on page 4)

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## St. Joseph House

By JOHN CORBETT

The other day I was "working the house." The atmosphere was peaceful. Earlier, a few people had come by for sandwiches, but now it was quiet. I thought it might be nice to say a few decades of the rosary.

Big Joe likes to pray it, too, so I called over to him at the sink and asked if he would join me. We both sat down in the backyard, silent for a few seconds to collect ourselves, rosaries in hand. "Excuse me" came the words. Sal was standing at the back door. "There is someone at the door...oh...are you going to pray the rosary?"

"Yes, would you like to join us," I replied. Sal sat down while I went to answer the front door.

It was Nat, one of the homeless men who comes around regularly. "John, can I have a cup of tea, maybe?"

"Sure Nat, come in. You know where it is. Pour yourself a cup." I went back outside. By this time, Juliana had joined Joe and Sal. I sat down and took out my rosary again. "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

"Excuse me, John...oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know you were praying. I just wanted some sugar for my tea...but, do you mind if I join you?"

My heart was moved. A homeless man with no possessions, the street for a bed, no family ties, who, as Mother Teresa declares "...continually intercedes for us without knowing it..." wants to know if he could join in the rosary. I was honored. "Sure Nat, pull up a chair," I said.

Now I know that the rosary is a unifying force within the Catholic Church today. It's so simple that the proud will have nothing to do with it, thereby rejecting God's grace through Mary. I know that the Pope has declared this a Marian year and opened it by praying the rosary in five languages - broadcast throughout the world. I know about the apparitions of our Lady at Fatima and other places where she emphasized the rosary and scapular. I know that Dorothy Day was very devoted to the rosary. But I must confess, I did have my doubts about what Nat knew.

Anyway, we began again, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" and proceeded, without interruption, until somewhere into the fifth mystery, as we were praying "...blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus..." when I noticed Nat reaching into his pocket. I suppose I should have had my eyes closed - meditating. Anyhow, what did he pull out but a book on how to pray the rosary.

It looked battered and old. Who knows how long he had it; and he started reading from it when we got to the Hail Holy Queen, as we all said together: "Hail Holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, Thine eyes of mercy toward us, and, after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet, Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ." Then we prayed for the intention of the Holy Father and it was over.

We all thanked each other for the gift of being able to pray with one another and then dispersed to the rest of the day. Joe went back to the dishes. Juliana went back to talking. Nat went back to his tea, and Sal went looking for a job. I went back to answering the door (which



Rita Corbin

incidentally had a rosary and sacred heart recently painted on it by Robert).

Now, I want to tell you, I have absolutely no doubt that the spiritual lines of connection between people of all walks of life, which are being ripped apart in this evil age, can be restored by the power of the rosary. As Bishop Fulton Sheen says, "...the rosary can be the greatest of all therapies for troubled modern men."

The experience of grace I had just shared is proof of that. There are people who are thirsting to pray the rosary with others, if only asked. This world needs the rosary. The Catholic Church needs the rosary. St. Joseph House needs the rosary. Because, as far as I'm concerned, if Nat needs the rosary, we all need the rosary.

The Lord's inheritance is, in a general sense, the church; in a special sense, Mary; in an individual sense, the Christian. Christ dwelt for nine months in the tabernacle of Mary's womb. He dwells until the end of the ages in the tabernacle of the church's faith. He will dwell for ever in the knowledge and love of each faithful soul.

—St. Isaac of Stella

## Homily in Gdansk

# Solidarity Between People

By POPE JOHN PAUL II

(Excerpts from a homily given June 12, 1987, at the shipbuilding center of Gdansk, Poland. Eds. note.)

"To You, eternal Lord, adoration and glory."

When the Eucharistic procession starts its journey on the feast of Corpus Christi, this old Polish song is heard in the town streets and village roads.

During these days, this wonderful chorus of praise sounds even more powerfully on the whole path of the Eucharistic Congress in Poland. Today it sounds in Gdansk.

What is the nature of Your glory, Christ? Why is it accompanied by the adoration of the church in each generation? Your glory is the fact that You give Yourself... "that You give Yourself to us who are unworthy." That You, God, the ineffable and inscrutable One Who "dwells in unapproachable light" (1 Tm. 6:16), became so enormously "accessible." Not only could human eyes see You; human hands could touch You - as the embodied Word, as the Son of Man - but also man could nail You to the cross, could involve You in the experience of death which is his share and ultimate destiny on this earth. Men could disgrace You when You Yourself were willing, as the power of the eternal Spirit, to "humble Yourself, becoming obedient to death" (Phil. 2:8).

And not only this. You, Who "loved His own in the world and He loved them to the end" (Jn. 13:1), became for all ages the Eucharist - sacrifice and nourishment - of Your church! This is Your glory, O Christ, eternal Lord... This is Your glory, God, Whose name is love (1 Jn. 4:8). This is Your glory, our eternal Lord...

Once again, I express my joy that, at this stage of the Eucharistic Congress, I can be with you in Gdansk. For in this town and, simultaneously, on the whole Baltic coast and in other workplaces in Poland were undertaken enormous efforts aimed at restoring the full personal and social dimensions of human work.

Perhaps this matter is less understood in prosperous countries where prosperity borders on consumeristic abuse. But it is understood everywhere that the problem of work lies at the base of authentic progress and liberation of man. For work has exactly this dimension, as indicated in church teaching, starting from the Gospel and the fathers of the church, and, in recent times, from *Rerum Novarum* to *Laborem Exercens*.

The Gospel in today's liturgy introduces us, in a way, to the heart of this problem. Here is a landlord who (at different times of the day) hires laborers for work in a vineyard. A vineyard is a typical field of activity for the country where Jesus was teaching. Even if this field of activity may rightly seem very modest in comparison with contemporary fields of industrial activity such as, for instance, the Gdansk shipyards, we are still talking about the same eternal analogy. The landlord says to the laborers: "Go into

my vineyard, and I will give you what is just" (Mt. 20:4). Consequently he draws up a contract for work and, at the same time, for just payment, for just remuneration for work.

The history of justice and injustice has developed around this eternal issue from one generation to another in the mutual relations between employer and employee. A central chapter of this social issue is developing. For labor lies in the center of this important "issue."

It is true that work needs to be paid for, but this is not all.

Labor cannot be treated - at any time or place - as a commodity, because man cannot be a commodity for another man but must be a subject. He participates in labor through his entire humanity and his subjectivity. Labor opens the entire dimension of human subjectivity in social life and also the subjectivity of society composed of workmen. Thus all human rights should be perceived in connection with man's work, and all of them should be fulfilled.

Human labor has to be paid for, and at the same time it is impossible to respond to human work with only payment. After all, man is not only an "executor" but a co-creator of the work which develops in his workshop. He has the right to self-determination as an employee - which is expressed in, among other forms, trade unions: "independent and self-governing" as it was underlined here in Gdansk.

"Bear one another's burdens" - this concise sentence of the apostle is an inspiration for solidarity between people and in society. Solidarity - it means one and another, and if there is a burden, a burden carried together, in community. Thus never one against another. Other against others. And never a "burden" carried by man alone, without help from others. The struggle cannot be stronger than solidarity. The program of struggle cannot be above the program of solidarity. Otherwise the burdens grow too heavy and the spread of these burdens increases disproportionately. Even worse, when struggle is put first (especially in the meaning of the struggle between classes), it can easily happen that some of the others remain on the "social field" as enemies, as those who should be fought or destroyed, rather than as those with whom should be conducted a search for agreement or thought of as jointly "bearing burdens."

In every holy Mass, the sacrifice of our redemption enters the fruit of "human labor," every human work. Bread is a "synthetic" example of this and wine as well. Everyday human work inscribes itself in the Eucharist: in the sacrament of our redemption as the "great mystery of faith." Every day, in so many places on the earth, God's perspectives are revealed in human labor.

"May this bread become for us the food of redemption... This wine our spiritual drink."

Your adoration and glory, our eternal Lord, for all centuries... Amen.

### WE ARE NOT TAX EXEMPT

All gifts to the Catholic Worker go to a common fund which is used to meet the daily expenses of our work.

Gifts to our work are not tax-deductible. As a community, we have never sought tax-exempt status since we are convinced that justice and the works of mercy should be acts of conscience which come at a personal sacrifice, without governmental approval, regulation or reward. We believe it would be a misuse of our limited resources of time and personnel (as well as a violation of our understanding of the meaning of community) to create the organizational structure required, and to maintain the paperwork necessary for obtaining tax-deductible status. Also, since much of what we do might be considered "political," in the sense that we strive to question, challenge and confront our present society and many of its structures and values, some would deem us technically ineligible for tax-deductible, charitable status.

# Development in Rural Honduras and Its Obstacles

By BOB & GRACIE EKBLAD

Upon returning home to Honduras, we always expect a mixture of good and bad news, preparing ourselves for the worst. Has the program fallen apart, our house burned down, or a friend died? This year, we were especially anxious to hear how things had gone during our three month absence. In September of 1986, the twenty-five promoters of Tierra Nueva elected ten representatives to form the Coordinating Committee. For the first time we left the program completely in the hands of local leaders.

We were excited to hear that several women whom Gracie has been working with have been sharing their knowledge with women in nearby villages. Wives of farmers working with Tierra Nueva had requested courses in preventive health practices such as nutritional cooking, the use of medicinal plants, basic first aid and hygiene. Also, the Coordinating Committee had organized five-day courses in twenty different villages in response to requests from groups of farmers for the introductory five-day course entitled "Appropriate Technology for the Use and Management of Steeply-Inclined Land." The villagers had agreed to provide food and lodging for two promoters. These 200 farmers are now digging contoured drainage ditches and planting pasture-grass barriers to protect their lands, incorporating weeds and brush into the soil rather than burning it off and making compost to slowly rebuild their exhausted soil. What is most encouraging is that these farmers are motivated enough to sacrifice five work days to receive the course as well as share their limited food with promoters who are poor peasants like themselves.

#### Initial Difficulties

We remember well the difficulties we had convincing farmers of the importance of protecting and rebuilding their soil when we first began this program in August of 1982. Our status as North Americans and "educated professionals" meant that peasants automatically distrusted us. Their past experience with others from our nation and social class made them assume we had come to their country to give handouts, proselytize, exploit or, at best, teach impractical, theoretical ideas. After six months of sweating with picks and shovels on our steep demonstration plot, and a record bean harvest, only twelve skeptical farmers agreed to receive our first course in March of 1983. We followed up these classes with hundreds of personal visits, helping these farmers dig their ditches, plant corn and beans and control their insect pests. As a result of their success, 131 farmers had received technical assistance from our program by August of 1985. Shortly thereafter, many of the surrounding villages were requesting courses in the new methods.

At this point we began to send the more articulate and experienced farmers out to give courses. In September of 1985 we sent out twelve promoters in pairs to six new villages to give the introductory course to eighty-seven farmers. During that same period sixty-four farmers began working with Tierra Nueva through Larry and Joni Geer-Sell's program in San Luis. In February of 1986 we received letters from nineteen other villages requesting courses from our promoters. That year 276 farmers entered the Tierra Nueva program in Minas de Oro and another eighty-six in San Luis bringing the current total to 844 farmers who have received technical assistance in fifty-two villages.

From the beginning our goal has been to train local peasant promoters who could not only teach but also eventually take over the management of the program. We have tried to set up the ground-

work for an independent movement that could continue with minimal outside assistance rather than create a dependency on ourselves or any salaried professionals. This has involved continual meetings, personal visits and Bible studies as well as longer seminars on topics such as participatory education, conflict resolution, how to read and study the Bible, basic money management, composting, latrine and grain storage silo

gesture on our part.

The good news we've found upon returning is that the promoters are finally managing this program. The bad news is that the local office of the Honduran Government's Department of Natural Resources (Recursos Naturales) has been aggressively undermining our program with a U.S. government-funded program of their own.

With the recent implementation of a U.S. Agency for International Development (AID)-funded and directed development plan, thousands of dollars are being channeled into our area in the form of incentives given to peasants in exchange for measurable material changes in their farming practices. The lone agronomist who'd managed Minas de Oro's government Recursos Naturales office for five years before we came was sent five other agronomists to help him implement this new program. They include specialists in soil and water conservation, livestock, reforestation and a person who works with women's groups promoting gardening and fuel-efficient stoves. On paper, the program looks great. Put into practice, there are many barriers to effective work.

When the five specialists were sent out to support the local government agronomist he understandably felt pressure to keep them busy. But, by the time they came, many peasant promoters were already teaching soil and water conservation practices in the surrounding villages. We attempted to coordinate our efforts with the young extensionists, only to find that they could not be counted on logically. They would often break commitments to drop Tierra Nueva promot-



Heart Bloom

Susan MacMurdy

construction. We also have decided to pay the promoters \$5.00 for every day they go out. That allows them to hire someone to help them make up for the day they lost in their fields as well as pay them the minimum \$2.50 wage - a token

ers off in distant villages where they taught, causing farmers waiting for their arrival to lose a day of work. Other times they'd insist on returning to Minas de Oro for lunch, forcing the promoters to leave shortly after they'd started a meeting. Every Friday at noon, many extensionists leave to spend the weekend at their homes in other parts of the country. They don't return until late Monday morning, leaving only three full days to work. For the majority of peasants, Proyecto Manejo is encouraging dependency on not only subsidies but also on permanent, government professionals.

Although land is being protected from erosion, an attitude of "I'll change if you pay me" is being encouraged in contrast to more difficult changes that happen through the harder work of educating. As Elias Sanchez, the director of our support agency ACORDE is fond of saying: "It's harder to dig a contoured ditch in a person's mind than in his land." In using incentives to produce measurable effects, rather than working at resolving the underlying structural and spiritual problems, AID's Proyecto Manejo will cause deeper problems than they are solving.

We continue to support the local promoters in their efforts to teach those who haven't had the opportunity to learn. We have invited Richard Peters, the director of Rural Development for AID Honduras here. We hope that these problems can be worked out. It's sad to see U.S. taxpayers money not only duplicating but working against the private contribution of the churches and individuals that have been contributing to Tierra Nueva. Please pray with us for a resolution of this conflict.

# Cult, Culture and Cultivation

Catholic Worker Farm  
P.O. Box 53  
Sheephunch, CA 95250

Dear friends,

The rumblings in my mind, amid the commotion here, have finally evolved to a "State of the Farm" address. We are well into our eleventh year here at this "wilderness cum farm" place. The other founding members are now gone.

And what of the rest of us? Brad has been here since September and he's not a fast mover so he says he's not going anywhere soon, which is fine with us. Truthfully, he and we need time to see if the Catholic Worker Farm "speaks to his condition" as the Quakers say.

And what about us - us being the Montesanos? Well, we still love the land here and the lifestyle. And, Chris and I still love the Catholic Worker. Chris has been with the Worker seventeen years now and I for fifteen; as the title of the recent Los Angeles Catholic Worker Celebration of Dorothy Day advertised, we are "Still Crazy After All These Years."

After this many years with the Worker, and with three kids to boot, we don't have any assets you could put in a bank. As always, we rely on God to see us through. But, we know this means occasional searing glances within, asking who we are and where are we going. It is clear that our Central American focus has not worked out, despite many trials. We are too far from clusters of Spanish-speaking folks for any refugees to want to make their home here. The kind of hospitality we have done in the past was just not conducive to family life. What, therefore, can we do?

First, perhaps one could understand how and under what circumstances we survive. Over the past year and a half, my after-hours crisis work with the County Mental Health Clinic has provided the main income, small though it is, for the farm. Our candle business, slowly grow-

ing, has paid the property taxes, car insurance and other bills which pile up. We have not asked nor received much in the way of donations except in cases of special need. Survival has been the main concern; realize here that we are still four and a half miles from the nearest electricity, are responsible for our own water, septic, power, road, building and land upkeep on the eighty acres.

What we have done thus far:

- First the farm itself has been carved out of an essentially wilderness area. We have built a number of dwellings, sheds, etc., with one dwelling still half-finished, and installed and maintained a complex water system, planted gardens and trees and fenced-in pastures.

- The property has been put in a Land Trust and cannot be sold but only passed on to like-minded groups to do good works.

- The farm community has provided hospitality to many people with varied problems, both short term and long term. These included teenagers, battered women and their children, homeless folks, medically and mentally ill and people with drug and alcohol problems.

- Respite and retreat space have been provided for those who have needed a quiet place to pray or to reorient their lives.

- Many volunteers have come to new levels of meaning and significant directional changes in their lives.

- Many of us have been nourished and encouraged to take stands on the wider issues of justice and peace which concern us.

- Some of us have been consistently active in local community affairs.

- The fledgling Candle Works candle business continues to grow, the craft component of the C.W. Farm vision spelled out by Peter Maurin.

- Our commitment to alternative energy is still firm and we are frugal with

(Continued on page 8)

Y Not Farm  
7113 128th Avenue  
Holland, MI 49424

Dear friends,

I got a very interesting letter from a local seed supplier/dealer. In part, it said: "Due to the unprecedented demand for most farm seed... most quotes in our recent Spring Catalog are in the process of being updated. As a result of the shortages now developing and the volatility of the markets, we are quoting on a day by day basis. There simply is not enough seed to cover current need."

There was also an interesting article in the Grand Rapids Press newspaper on this subject. It said the U.S. Department of Agriculture's limitation on oat planting was being lifted for a year. (The U.S.D.A. sets crop planting limits, and farmers must comply in order to be enrolled in any of the government money benefit programs.) The action was taken to alleviate the short supply of oats. The expected carry-over of 1987 crop oats was projected to be the lowest since the early 1900's.

My question is, why, all of a sudden, is it announced that seed is in short supply? So the seed dealer, the middleman, can make a fortune on the markup on the price of this spring's seed. I remember quite clearly last summer, we farmers around here were told we would be given only seventy-five cents a bushel for the oats we grew, and the grain elevators weren't too interested in taking the oats even at that ridiculously low price. That price was less than it cost farmers to grow them. And now they want to create a shortage and sell them back to us at a high price when they wouldn't let us make any money farming them last year.

This isn't new. Many farmers are going bankrupt. Many farmers are not able to keep their equipment and buildings in repair lately. It is not the fate of nature, it

(Continued on page 8)

# More than Survivors

(Continued from page 1)

search to authenticate details of wartime Hiroshima, long interviews with many hibakusha, and a sensitivity honed by her years of volunteer work with the San Francisco-based Friends of Hibakusha.

The novel opens in the spring of 1945. Chiyo Hara is raising her three children in a poverty imposed by the many years of war. Her husband, a respected teacher, had been drafted; sent to China, he is captured by the Soviets and spends years as a prisoner of war in a Siberian camp. Chiyo is a traditional woman obedient in her relationship with her older, wealthy brother, to whose home she evacuates her two youngest children.

## The First to Die

On the morning of August 6, 1945, her eldest son, Kenichi, joins his school class, mobilized to tear down houses in the center of the city to create fire lanes in an effort to reduce damage from the saturation bombing Hiroshima had been inexplicably spared, but which they anxiously prepared for. Nine thousand middle school students like Kenichi Hara were among the first to die; many of them evaporated—not burned, but evaporated—by the most intense thermal heat.

Chiyo is able to free herself from the wreckage of her home and begins what becomes many days of walking through the irradiated city (knowing nothing, of course, about radiation) to search for her son, a journey of horror that is described with dignified restraint, a narrative whose tone is similar to that of hibakusha testimony—what one translator calls “an artless eloquence.”

The assistance she receives, that which she offers to others, belies one of the more persistent Hiroshima myths: that people fled from Hiroshima, abandoning the injured and dying. The large num-

bers of “secondary hibakusha” (people who entered the city to search for relatives and those who worked on relief teams) testify to the courage of people like Chiyo Hara who are human in a nightmarish world. While searching for Kenichi, in the weeks and months that follow, Chiyo imagines what death must have been like for her disciplined, serious elder son:

Kenichi shimmered before her in full force, breaking into a thousand pieces, scattering over the ground, shreds of scorched uniform and the contents of his lunch box spread out, burned black and uneaten, his identification tag glittering, its light piercing her eyeballs, blasting her head apart, ending with exhaustion and nausea.

Emotionally distraught, her body sickened by the radiation it had absorbed, Chiyo recuperates with her two younger children at her brother’s home, its gardens transformed into a hospital for many who were in need of both shelter and medical care. Eventually recovering the strength to return to the site of what was their home, they build a small shack and support themselves by painting folk dolls for souvenir shops. What begins as a cottage industry becomes an important contribution to Hiroshima’s economy, providing work, at fair wages, for hibakusha, whose bomb-related injuries made some type of jobs impossible. (In one powerful scene, Chiyo and her family confront PX officials at an occupation base who stamp the dolls “made by survivors of the atomic bomb”; they resent this false charity and have the integrity to insist that their work sell only on its merit.)

As she gains competence in her economic life, Chiyo grapples with despair over the official silence regarding her

(Continued on page 6)

# A Peace Pagoda for New York City

By M. EILEEN LAWTER

It is always amazing to me to find moments of peace. Especially on our block down the street from the City Men’s Shelter here on the Lower East Side, where there is so much despair and unrest. Or even in our house where so many homeless and disturbed people are a part of each day. Or even in our households of better than fifty people where our personal and philosophical conflicts are ever present. The grace of joy-filled, loving, and peaceful moments rarely go unnoticed by me.

This same grace is something I experience at every encounter with any of my friends of the Japanese Buddhist order of Nipponzan Myohoji. For more than four years I have known Kato-shonin and Clare-san in Boston, and, with amazement, have witnessed their dedication to peace. Japanese Reverend Mamuro Kato and American Sister Clare Carter have been great personal examples to me of hospitality and ecumenism. In the order’s quest for peace, they have joyfully welcomed people of all faiths to their household for prayer, meals, peace witness and work. Theirs is the order which sponsored the Peace Walk which ended with the June 12 Peace Rally in N.Y.C. in 1982.

Since 1916, their founder, the Most Reverend Nichidatsu Fujii (1885-1985), had been drumming, chanting and walking; dedicated to world peace. Inspired by the horror of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, he began with his community to build pagodas dedicated to world peace.

Today, there are Peace Pagodas in Japan, India, Sri Lanka, England, Vienna, and the United States. I was happy to help work on the building of the first Peace Pagoda in the U.S. which was in-

augurated in October, 1985 in Leverett, Massachusetts. There is another under construction in Grafton, New York, and in Seattle, Washington. There are hopes for a Pagoda in California, and right now there are plans for one here in New York City.

In February, I paid a visit to the Rev. Kimiyasu Ishibashi, of the order’s N.Y.C. contingent, who lives on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Over tea and rice cookies, Ishibashi-shonin showed me plans for a Pagoda on Roosevelt Island. It will face the United Nations, and will act as a sign of the goal of the U.N. as a world peace-keeping organization. It will be a reminder and inspiration to world peace.

The plans were informally presented by the N.Y. Peace Pagoda Committee to the Roosevelt Island Operation Corporation in a December 17, 1986 meeting. The development proposal will not be formally presented until the Master Plan has been completed and approved by R.I.O.C.

The N.Y. Peace Pagoda Committee is made up of members of many different faith communities committed to peace. The proposed Pagoda has been designed to respect the proposed Roosevelt memorial and the character of the Island. Projected completion of the project, once building can begin, is one year for the Pagoda and an additional six months for the surrounding gardens. It will be constructed by the monks and nuns of the order, craftspeople and others.

We at the Catholic Worker want to add our heartfelt prayers and hope for this center of peace and prayer. Thank you to the members of the Nipponzan Myohoji for your inspiring example of loving kindness and peace.

**THE MAKING OF THE ATOMIC BOMB.** By Richard Rhodes. Simon & Schuster, 1986. \$24.95. Reviewed by David J. Hawkin.

This book has received lavish praise for its immense scope and detailed account of the scientific, political, and social background of the making of the atomic bomb. It is written in well-crafted and often lyrical prose and, despite its great size (886 pages) and occasional arcane descriptions of scientific processes, it makes for compelling reading. Richard Rhodes does not get around to describing the actual making of the bomb until midway through the book, and the first half of the work is taken up with a detailed account of all the significant discoveries in physics leading up to the discovery of nuclear fission. We are also offered biographical sketches of the scientists involved and analysis of the social and political situations in which they lived and worked.

It is at the end of the book that it becomes apparent why Richard Rhodes situates the making of the bomb in this larger context: his intent is to write more than a history of the bomb, he is writing an *apologia* for science itself. Thus he goes to great lengths to show that the making of the bomb was not the work of one or even a few men, but was the culmination of the work of the scientific community. He presents scientists as moral



# BOOK

The most telling quotation on this issue is, however, from Robert Oppenheimer, the well-known leader of the scientific team which made the bomb:

When you come right down to it the reason we did this job is because it was an organic necessity. If you are a scientist you cannot stop such a thing. If you are a scientist you believe that it is good to find out how the world works... that it is good to turn over to mankind at large the greatest possible power to control the world...

The quotation reveals a modern understanding of science in which it is used for control over the world. In former civilizations such as ancient Greece, however, science was conceived of as understanding how the world worked, not controlling it. It is this fusion which made it possible to think of making the bomb. There are, therefore, those who claim that the modern world is in danger because of the mandate of modern science to control human and non-human nature. They appeal to the state to place limits on science. Richard Rhodes’ argument is, in effect, a direct challenge to such people, for he is claiming that science is im-



The Peace Prayer of Sadako Sasaki

Susan MacMurdy

searchers for truth and the “republic of science” as international in scope and founded on openness. Science should not be blamed for the nuclear dilemma, says Rhodes, for to do so confuses the messenger with the message. Scientists did not invent nuclear fission, they discovered it. It is, claims Rhodes, the modern nation state which has used science and technology to protect itself and further its ambitions. It is the nation state which perverted science. But (and this is the crux of his argument) the total annihilation which the bomb is able to bring has so changed political realities that science must eventually destroy the concept of the nation state, for the only security from the bomb comes through decreasing national sovereignty:

Rather than a guarantor of sovereignty the arms race has proven a *reductio ad absurdum* of sovereignty. Though they bristle with... weapons, the superpowers confront each other today as totally vulnerable, totally dependent for their continued survival on mutual and reasonable restraint, their sovereignties... thoroughly compromised...

At several points in the book Rhodes alludes to the inevitability of the bomb. As he puts it: “The bomb was latent in nature as a genome is latent in flesh.”

posing limits on the nation state.

The two heroes of the books are Leo Szilard and Niels Bohr. These two scientists realized better than anyone else how the bomb had changed the political situation of the world. Both men saw how the existence of the bomb might be used constructively to create a new political understanding. But the Allied leaders failed to comprehend the nature of the challenge which the thinking of these two men presented. Both Bohr and Szilard were very disheartened by the course of events which led to the dropping of the bomb, an act which Szilard described as “one of the greatest blunders in history.” Nevertheless, Rhodes sees cause for optimism and speaks of science helping us avoid nuclear disaster: “Science fights the exclusivity of the nation state... by sharing its discoveries freely... That deep trust in the promise of openness to remake the world must inspire even at the brink of the abyss.”

There is no doubt that this is an important book which deserves to be widely read. It is a book packed with insights and information. In particular, the book shows how war brutalizes and how quickly the previously unacceptable can, in the context of war, become accepted. Franklin Roosevelt in 1939 had forth-

(Continued on page 5)

# REVIEWS



(Continued from page 4)

rightly condemned bombing of civilian targets; yet by the end of the war the U.S. was routinely fire-bombing Japanese cities. Robert Oppenheimer claimed to adhere to the principle of *ahimsa* (non-violence); yet not only did he participate in the making of the bomb, but he also endorsed the idea (never carried out) of trying to kill half a million Germans by poisoning their food supply with radioactive dust. As War Secretary Henry Stimson pointedly observed, the war created an appalling lack of conscience and compassion.

Richard Rhodes also captures extremely well the ambiguity many of the scientists felt about the project in which they were engaged. Many had grave doubts about the morality of it, but these doubts were overcome either by scientific curiosity, or by fear that the Nazis would make the bomb first, or by simple patriotism. This inevitably leads one to question Rhodes' own faith in science. He argues that science transcends national boundaries and nationalist sentiment. This is of course true. But it is scientists who make up the scientific enterprise, and scientists are human. Scientists too are brutalized by war, they too have narrow loyalties and over-weening ambitions. Rhodes speaks of science confronting the nation state with the "facts and probabilities it discovers in the course of its daily work" and goes on: Nuclear winter, whatever its level of severity, is one of those probabilities. Damage to the ozone layer is another. The likelihood of widespread epidemics after a nuclear war and of mass starvation because of disruptions in food transport are two more . . . Each new contribution to understanding — more knowledge turned over to mankind — must further erode that stubborn and potentially genocidal ignorance [of the nation state].

These are laudable sentiments, but not all scientists are working on research of this kind. Some, for example, are working on "Star Wars," trying to perfect systems of "defense" which would make it possible to wage nuclear war. Richard Rhodes accuses others of confusing the message with the messenger, but he makes too sharp a divorce between the two. It is one of the ironies of the book that Rhodes' excellent presentation of the human side of the scientist does not, in the end, act as a counterbalance to his own wholesome faith in science itself.

**THE CATHOLIC PEACE TRADITION.**  
By Ronald G. Musto. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 10545, 1986. Paperback \$21.95. Reviewed by Robert Gilliam.

This is the first volume of a planned three-volume set on the Catholic peace tradition. Ronald Musto describes it in his Preface as a ". . . history of the peace tradition in the Roman Catholic Church from the time of the Gospels to the twentieth century. Its purpose is to show that there is a continuing, unbroken, self-sustaining stream within Catholicism from the martyrs and pacifists of the early Church to John XXIII and the peacemakers of our time." (p. xiii) The second volume, *The Peace Tradition in the Catholic Church*, is an annotated bibliography (New York, Garland, 1986). The third volume, an anthology of Catholic writings on peace, has yet to appear. Catholic peace people, who have long needed such help, are in Professor Musto's debt. His is a major undertaking and obviously a labor of love.

Ronald Musto deals with the New Testament and the early church rather briskly, presumably because a good deal has

already been written. He tends to be somewhat dismissive of nonpacifist readings of the New Testament and to proceed on the questionable assumption that the evidence from the early Church reveals an unambiguous pacifism. His strongest sections are devoted to the fourth to sixteenth centuries. His academic specialty is the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. He introduces us to a variety of lesser known figures and movements. This is the freshest section of the book and it left me anxious to hear more. I hope he returns some day to a more detailed treatment of the Peace of God, the Franciscans, and medieval, radical, lay movements. The last more than a third of the book is devoted to the 20th century. There are sixty pages of notes and an impressive bibliography.

What, exactly, Musto means by the Catholic peace tradition remains unclear. On the one hand, it is certain that there is an ancient, central, Catholic tradition which hates war, loves peace, and urges other than violent solutions, a moderate, rational, pacific tradition. The just war theory, at its best, is part of this tradition. There is also a lesser and more radical pacifist tradition, in which the Catholic Worker stands. The two are not the same and Musto tends to confuse them throughout the book. Lactantius, St. Augustine, Erasmus, St. Thomas More, Pope John, and Thomas Merton all have a place in a Catholic peace tradition, but not all are pacifists. The crucial dividing line is not between those who love war and those who love peace, but between those who will finally go to war when they "must" and those who will not. The number in the latter group, both within and without the Catholic tradition, is very small. It is important to see how unusual, even extreme, this position is, because without that knowledge, conviction will fade in the hard light of a just cause. And though it becomes increasingly difficult to imagine just conduct in war, there are just causes. The just war, however sloppily applied and toothless in practice, still represents a kind of moral common sense about war. The need remains for a more thorough and focused treatment of Catholic pacifism.

In his long final section on the twentieth century, Ronald Musto is generally reliable, but overly dependent on secondary sources and given to hyperbole. He refers to ". . . the pacifist position of Vatican II." (p. 233) He describes Thomas Merton as ". . . the major impetus in the Catholic struggle against the American war in Vietnam." (p. 252) He claims that "Robert Ludlow and Ammon Hennacy symbolized and largely effected the rebirth of the Catholic Worker and Catholic peacemaking after World War II." (p. 249) While there is some truth in each of these statements, all are significantly overstated. Most tellingly, he also writes, "Catholic pacifism first competed with, then cooperated with, and finally supplanted the just war tradition. It is becoming the major peace tradition within the Church today." (p. 239)

Reservations aside, we are grateful to Professor Musto for bringing a grand historical perspective to the reexamination of the Catholic community's thinking on war and peace and for directing our attention to its pacifist elements.

At the beginning and end of every sermon he announced peace; in every greeting he wishes for peace; in every contemplation he sighed for ecstatic peace — like a citizen of that Jerusalem of which that Man of Peace says, who was peaceable with those who hate peace:  
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

—St. Bonaventure on St. Francis

**DISARMING THE HEART: Toward a Vow of Nonviolence.** By John Dear. Paulist Press, 997 Macarthur Boulevard, Mahwah, N.J. 07430, 1986. 132 pages. Paperback \$6.95. Reviewed by Eileen Egan.

John Dear describes a crucial event in his life, the August morning on a hill in rural Pennsylvania when three friends joined him in pronouncing a vow of lifelong nonviolence before a simple wooden cross. They recited Psalms and Scriptural readings, including the passage from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly . . ." (Matt. 5:44)

Dear relates how he was drawn to an explicit profession of a vow of nonviolence during the thirty-day silent retreat



Meinrad Craighead

of St. Ignatius Loyola, the Spiritual Exercises. "Deep reflection on the Gospel of Jesus," writes Dear, "and how I could further accept God's disarming love brought me to realize that love is not compatible with violence in thought, word or deed."

The four young men, Jesuits, prepared their vow in the tradition of their community, containing the words, "Trusting in Your infinite goodness and mercy, I, before the Cross of Jesus, vow perpetual nonviolence in fulfillment of the command of Your Son and in imitation of His holy life and death."

Disarming the Heart is a book of spiritual reflections, powerful in their immediacy, on how taking a vow of nonviolence can be a channel of grace to followers of Jesus trapped, whether they will it or not, in complicity with a pervasive web-work of violence.

Another strand in the development of the vow of nonviolence is recounted in the preface of Disarming the Heart contributed by Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB. On August 6, 1985, on the fortieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, she joined a small group which also took a vow of nonviolence in the Nevada desert. There, nuclear test explosions take place to update the efficacy of weaponry — more properly, instruments of genocide — that could threaten creation. The vow taken there, the Pax Christi vow of nonviolence, is featured on page five of John Dear's book. The Pax Christi vow had a long period of gestation, having been broached in 1978 at the Pax Christi annual meeting at Columbia University to mark the tenth anniversary of the death of Thomas Merton. The idea, then, was to propose that a vow of nonviolence be added to the three vows taken by those in religious orders. The idea surfaced once again when, early in 1985, Pax Christi was searching for a way to mark the Hiroshima anniversary.

## A CELEBRATION OF DOROTHY DAY'S BIRTHDAY AT THE NEVADA NUCLEAR TEST SITE.

Sunday, November 8th, will be the ninetieth anniversary of the birth of Dorothy Day. Along with the usual celebrations that go on at C.W. communities around the country, plans are now being made to mark this day by prayer and action at the Nevada nuclear test site.

The three-day event will begin on Friday, November 6, with a gathering of Catholic Workers and friends for discussion, presentations, prayer and parties, followed by nonviolence training, discussion and speakers on Saturday, and then, on Sunday, Mass, a prayer vigil and nonviolent civil disobedience at the test site.

If you are interested in attending, want to endorse the civil disobedience action, or can help in publicizing the gathering, contact the Los Angeles Catholic Worker, 632 North Britannia Street, Los Angeles, California 90033, (213) 267-8789.

Why not a vow of nonviolence so that those appalled by the violence outside them could start with attending to the violence in their own hearts? Taking the vow would admit that expunging demons within was necessary for taking a stand against the demons without.

Mary Lou Kownacki states, "Those striving for a 'consistent life ethic' of nonviolence will find in this book both the rationale for a vow of nonviolence and reflections on its implications. The book accomplishes much. For those who have taken the vow of nonviolence or who are convinced of its efficacy, the chapters offer spiritual support and nourishment. Dear cites the tradition of the vow in Hebrew Scripture and its importance in the Christian community from the beginning. 'Baptism,' he points out, 'is itself the promise, the vow, to follow Jesus and His way of life and to reject Satan and his way of life.' The pledge of the lay followers of St. Francis not to carry weapons is cited, as are the vows of Gandhi's co-workers. Those who worked with Martin Luther King for civil rights in Birmingham, Alabama, signed a Commitment Card. The moving text is printed in full, a text that breathes with the spirit of the Gospel.

Dear reminds the reader of the example of fidelity to nonviolence given by Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton and Mohandas Gandhi. He advertises to the concepts of Charles McCarthy, a theologian whose life work is involved with Gospel nonviolence. McCarthy grounds nonviolence in *agape* love, the redeeming love that seeks nothing for itself, but reaches out in good will to all humankind. For Fr. McCarthy, this love can nourish the willingness to suffer and receive the violence of others without retaliation as the way to overcome evil; it can also strengthen the willingness to serve others without the desire for reciprocation.

For those hesitant to take a vow of nonviolence, especially those who cite the warning of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount about oath-taking, Dear presents some revealing insights. In an oath, the Creator is called upon to witness to it and enforce it through coercion. Jesus was warning against legalism and a tendency to claim God as a witness or even use Him for one's own purposes. The vow, according to Dear, "should not be looked on as something we do for God, but as something God is doing in our lives." The vow, or promise, is a public recognition of what God has done and a pledge of cooperation with the grace of God. It is a way of saying "Yes" to the risks and the costs involved in living out the nonviolent love taught by Jesus to His followers.

In the early centuries after the death and resurrection of Jesus, a vow of nonviolence would certainly have seemed unnecessary, and possibly ridiculous. After fifteen hundred years of just war tradition, when Christians are rented out to kill and be killed in every war, including murderously indiscriminate nuclear war, the vow of nonviolence is a way of expressing public fidelity to the Good News of love. Even for those who do not share the message of Jesus, it is not hard to see that nonviolence, once a transcendent value, is now a pragmatic necessity. Disarming the Heart may awaken many consciences to consider a public profession of loving goodwill towards a threatened human family.

# More than Survivors

(Continued from page 4)

husband's repatriation, private waiting that is somewhat assuaged by her involvement with a national movement of wives demanding their husbands' return. Years later, when some of the husbands do return, they are physical and mental shadows of the men who had gone to war.

Chiyo's private life unfolds, a complex weaving of growth, mourning, healing and conflict, against images of the physical rebuilding of Hiroshima. In *The Autumn Wind* largely avoids the "political" face of Hiroshima, a necessary limitation. City officials, historians, physicians, social workers, clergy, peace activists and educators have gathered data, written books, organized, and spoken passionately for and with hibakusha, and against war. The reality they attempt to describe has been lived by thousands of Chiyo Haras, and so her story illuminates many "facts" – never didactically, always personally. We care about her friends the Ikedas, and share their stoical sadness of the fate of their grandchild, exposed to the bomb *in utero*, his placid nature the result of retardation. We are charmed by the delicate, yet vibrant Kyoko, about to begin college, who suffers from radiation illness eight years after she encountered the bomb. We share the pain of Chiyo's daughter, Yoko, whose marriage plans are opposed by her uncle (but not her mother), out of his fear that the genetic permutations caused by radiation exposure would cause damage to future generations of their family. Through the years one sees Chiyo Hara growing in stature, and aware of the irony that it is the war, and the crucible of suffering she endured, that led to her strength. Disobeying her brother, she insists on marrying a man who has gently reawakened Chiyo's desire for a complete physical and emotional relationship with a man.

In *The Autumn Wind* is a welcome addition to the library of books about the atom bomb, from the encyclopedic Hiroshima and Nagasaki to John Hersey's classic Hiroshima and Masaji Ibuse's Black Rain. Writing eloquently on a subject that others have tarnished with either rhetoric, romanticized sentimentality, or cultural misconceptions, Dorothy Stroup does not overwhelm her reader, nor assault with threats of nuclear cataclysm. Rather, because she writes with a clear eye and steady hand that is guided by respect for hibakusha, she is able to invite the reader to be open to Hiroshima's story. She does not dilute the horror of Hiroshima's destruction, but she does what few others have (or perhaps what few have attempted), which is to evoke the strength and decency and human goodness of those who survived the atom bomb: a commitment to humanity that arose from the ashes.

Although she lived in Hiroshima for three years in the 1960's, and addressed Hiroshima and the issues raised by the bombing in fiction, the intensive writing of *In The Autumn Wind* followed a ten-week stay in Hiroshima in 1979. Writing of that time, Dorothy Stroup reflected: "When I left Japan for America in November, 1979, I had the eerie feeling of being chosen. It seemed to me that there was no one else at that moment who knew the things I knew, and who could write about them in English to tell the human story of this atomic experience. We haven't heard it since John Hersey's Hiroshima, published a generation ago."

That sense of "being chosen," and the gratitude and humility it engenders, is evident in this book. The dedication of seven years of writing gives it its strength, but "being chosen" suffuses this book with integrity.

# Guatemala: A Refugee's Story

(Continued from page 1)

fied aunt was unable to speak. Elena lied and told the soldiers her husband was a cruel drunkard whom she had kicked out of the house, hoping never to see again. "Her lying saved our lives," Marta explains, fighting back tears. The soldiers said they would return – and if they did not find the men – they would kill the

town near the border. From there they crossed into Mexico – fearing at any moment they would be picked up by the military and murdered.

The Ixcots found work picking coffee and the children helped – sorting the green and red coffee beans. When that work ended they moved on to a chicken farm and were hired to kill, pluck and clean chickens. Felipe worked all night long and part of the day – sleeping only a few hours each day. When Felipe was hiding in Guatemala for three years, Marta had gone to work – to help her family survive; in Mexico she went to work again.

Marta lived in the home of the chicken rancher. Every morning she awoke at 3 a.m. to go to the market to sell chickens. All day she took care of the ranchers' children and, afterwards, cleaned their house, washed dishes and clothes and ironed until 10 at night.

Eventually, the Ixcots met some North Americans who helped them decide to come to the United States. In this country they learned about the Sanctuary movement – an organization of people who aid Guatemalan and Salvadoran refugees. Weston Priory, a monastery in Vermont, offered the family refuge. It is one of three hundred and seven church groups and other organizations in the



whole family. It was too dangerous to live in their village anymore. Not being able to tell anyone where they were going, the family fled and met Felipe in a

## Refugees in Mexico

# A Future Yet Unknown

By BROTHER MARTY SHEA, M.M.

(The following is taken from Brother Marty's reports from the Campeche refugee camps in Mexico. Eds. note.)

Essential to our being here with the Guatemalans seeking refuge in Mexico is to keep alive their hope, and everything that gives them hope turns their thoughts back to Guatemala. We can never know how devastating their leaving homelands has been for them. But I could feel it today, as we walked through the corn fields in a strange land, and saw Guatemala. Everything growing and green, reminds them of the place that has given them life. I thought of the expression "we are what we eat." But, for these people, it should be expanded to "they are what they plant and harvest and eat." The work of the fields gives life, and so it conditions their lifestyle, language and the very way they see life. They talked of the fields back "home" and I could see a sorrow come into their faces. Once again they were being driven from their fields into unknown lands of jungles and mountains. But there is hope; it was all around us. *Hope is green*, the same green of Guatemala with the same peace and promise of life for the coming year.

Returning to the camp, we suddenly returned to reality, and even our hope has to be realistic. There is no returning to Guatemala. Yet, life continues and, thank God, they can do some of the things they have always done, like plant new corn, work deep in the soil and, like today, walk with the family in the shade, deep within the green they have always known. It was the same happy feeling – life – and, for a little while, Guatemala didn't seem so far away, and, for a little while today, their sadness gave way to new life and hope.

Something Maria (not her real name) had said in one of the women's reflection groups struck me and I thought it important to talk about it. She remembered and repeated the comment carefully for me. "How will I be able to have confidence in my government ever again after what they have done to us?" She went on: "Now they talk to us to convince us to return but how can we believe them? What confidence can we have in their nice words when we don't believe the people that are speaking them? The words are very nice but we know the persons that are speaking them will never fulfill them."

Her fearfulness touched something deep within myself and I heard myself confessing to her: "How will I be able to have confidence in my government ever again after what it has done in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador? Daily, we listen to the Voice of America and programs of "disinformation" and propaganda from the State Department to justify our violence, our war, our aid to the Contras."

So we sat together, watching the children and sharing the same feelings. We wondered if we would ever "have confidence" again and know peace in this little part of the world.

Maria continued: "Sometimes, I fight in my own head, should we return or not? It's difficult even to think of it. Someday, there may be change, but I have no confidence in the army. With support we could return but not with the army as it exists today. Perhaps, someday, there will be change that would allow us to return. We still remember, and I live with the hope that the children will have the opportunity to know their homeland." David was two years old when they carried him the long distance to safety in Mexico. His little sister, Margarite, is just two years old and was born here in the camp.

So we sat and exchanged feelings and dreams and then came back to the reality of the refugee camp. We read the recent statement of the Archbishop of Guatemala telling the refugees *not* to return, because there is no adequate plan for their safe return. He clearly states that conditions in Guatemala have not changed and do not justify the refugees "confidence" to return.

There are no easy answers for Maria or for myself. But, at least we could share a little time, our feelings, our fears. And the future didn't seem so far away, as we watched the children playing, so full of life and hope.

United States whose members have voted to become sanctuaries. Sanctuary supporters claim that our government is partly responsible for the problems that force people to flee because it supplies the Guatemalan government with a steady flow of military aid. They believe Guatemalans and Salvadorans should be given Extended Voluntary Departure (EVD) status which would protect them from deportation. The United States uses EVD status to protect refugees from other countries like Afghanistan and Poland where violence and persecution are occurring.

Immigration authorities consider Guatemalans like the Ixcots, illegal aliens and, if arrested, subject to deportation. According to the State Department, the monks are breaking the law by harboring the family. Immigration authorities have not attempted to arrest the monks or the Ixcots, but refugee families and Sanctuary supporters elsewhere in the U.S. have been arrested.

In Vermont, Felipe works at the monastery cutting wood and making books. Elena teaches people how to weave. The children attend a private school. Everyone in the family speaks three languages – English, Spanish and Mam, the Indian dialect of their native village.

"I found it difficult to get used to this country," says Marta. "The first year here was the hardest. I met a lot of nice people and made many friends, but I felt weird because everything was so different." Alicia pipes in, "The kids here talk back to their parents and teachers. That's one thing I don't like. We were taught to respect our elders." Marta continues, "The winters are so long and cold. Spring and summer are nice, though, because it is like our climate in Guatemala. We speak Mam, weave and wear our traditional clothing whenever we can. These are 'treasures to us' Alicia exclaims and Marta agrees. "I miss my grandmother," Marta adds. "I was very close to her: she gave me advice about life. It is hard not to see her or write to her. If we wrote her a letter, the army would open it and know where we are. They might kill our relatives and others in our village."

Marta yearns for the day Guatemalans will be able to live in peace and her family can safely return to their native land. Until then, she wants to speak for her people and hopes more North Americans will understand what is happening in Guatemala. "We know the government of this country is sending aid to the Guatemalan military," Marta asserts. "I ask the United States government to use its tax money to feed the people who are dying of hunger and cold in this country instead of killing our people in Central America and, especially, Guatemala. I want to knock on the door of people's hearts and ask them to join us in our struggle to help save the lives of our Guatemalan sisters and brothers."

(For information on literature, public speakers, movies and ways to help, contact the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America, 59 E. Van Buren, Suite 1400, Chicago, IL 60605. Eds. note.)

## HATS OFF TO CANADA

Not often do we shower roses on a government. Yet we rejoice in a decision by the government of Canada. Early in the morning of June 30, the Canadian parliament, in a free vote conscience without the usual ties of party discipline, voted *not* to restore the death penalty. A poll had shown about 80% of Canadians in favor of capital punishment. During the campaign, however, Church leaders issued strong statements against the proposed change, and, eventually, the tide was turned, just in time for the vote.

# Interview with a Veteran: Things They Don't Tell You

(Continued from page 1)

loads and loads of things to do, and you're supposed to sit there and do your work and keep your mouth shut and not say nothin'. No. It doesn't work like that. It does not work like that.

LAM: What happens then, what's going on in their minds?

BW: Okay. Two of the people who jumped off the side of the boat were close to me. We used to talk a lot, and they'd tell me, they couldn't deal with it. They couldn't cope with the people taking their frustrations out on us. Civilians overseas taking their anguishes out on us and just literally looking at us as the bad guys, just because we wear the uniform. And some places that we went to we were not allowed to wear our uniforms because of violence. Athens, Greece, we could not step off of that boat in our uniform just because of the fact that they were having protests. There were a lot of angry Athenians over there. Two of the people made the mistake of coming out with their uniforms. They got killed. They were stabbed. Right outside the Air Force Base. It wasn't a pretty sight. I actually saw that.

LAM: How did you feel?

BW: I felt hurt. I first tried to put myself in *their* shoes (the Greek protesters). Why are they doing this? What could we have done that was so bad for them to take this kind of action against us? Here we are: we wear the uniform. We do what they say because it's a job, we have to. But as far as what [the command] are believing in, their causes, [GIs] have nothing to do with that. Whatever [the command] said to make these [protesters] angry, [GIs] have nothing to do with that. We're just carrying out orders. They pass it down, we follow orders....

They advertise it so sweet. They never really tell you exactly what's goin' on. You never know where they're going to ship you. You could be sent anywhere for TAD—Temporary Assignment Duty. You cannot control it. If they want to put you in the middle of Russia, they can put you there. You have no say so. So as far as all that traveling goes, uh huh, it's more or less a lie. I mean, you'd go there, but you won't get off the boat. You might see the island, passing it going to Grenada or Lebanon. You know "I've been to Bermuda, on my way down to South Africa to fight." But it's nothin' to really laugh about.

Ninety days was the longest time I spent on the water without seeing land. That's hard to do. A lot of people more or less could not take it.

We had one suicide within six months because he couldn't take it. They stop letters comin' onto the boat. When you're comin' through the I.O. (Indian Ocean) you have no mail comin' in, no mail goin' out. There's no telephone on the boat, so you're more or less alone. Six thousand people on one boat. It's a lot of hassle. We had a lot of shipmates fighting each other. We had this one who just went totally crazy, got hold of a gun, thought he was Rambo, started shooting up the officers. About two officers got killed, about three enlisted personnel died because of his mistake. Because of the pressures he couldn't take, he was just down there shooting up anything he saw walking.

LAM: What kinds of pressures would lead somebody to do that?

BW: He was an officer. He was in charge of flight ops, he worked up in the flight towers. This incident happened when they had discovered a Russian submarine under our aircraft carrier. He overheard higher ranking officers talking about playing games with this submarine, since it was Russian. So we had a plane called the S-3, it drops sonar buoys down to find out exactly where it's at.

And instead of dropping sonar buoys, they were dropping detonators right next to the submarine. Of course the Russians are going to send out reinforcements. So they sent out planes and more boats, fast frigates and everything. The next thing you know, we're going into emergency alert, going to GQ (General Quarters). That kind of thing scares you when it's *not* a drill. I felt scared. I was very scared. Because usually when they say "GQ, General Quarters, General Quarters. All men man your battle stations," they say, "This is only a drill." At first it ain't nothin' about a drill. The first thing that came to my mind is, "Oh, God. This is it. They finally messed up." And everybody knew what was goin' on with that boat. The first thing I said was,

ine's guns and started shooting. One of the officers he did shoot happened to be one of the people he heard talkin' about what they were gettin' ready to do. So I guess he took his anger out on him.

LAM: Did you ever see a plane shot down?

BW: Yes, I did. I saw two of them. We shot two planes with our F-14s. I actually saw it too. They flew over the boat. We lost planes off the boat. They sat there and they played air games—dog fights and things. First thing I thought of when I saw the explosion: there were human beings in there. Many. They were people like us. All you see now is metal falling down, fire in the water and stuff. I mean, they had family. It's not right; it wasn't right. They didn't do nothin'. They didn't

by yourself unless you know who's walkin' down there. A lot of people got trapped down there, locked in the space they couldn't get out of, just because of racism. A lot of fights on the top of the boat, people getting thrown off the boat, off the top of the boat because of racial slurs and things like that. And you catch a lot of officers too. They're supposed to be so dignified and upper class and set the example for you. You find a lot of them very racist.

LAM: What finally gave you the determination to get out?

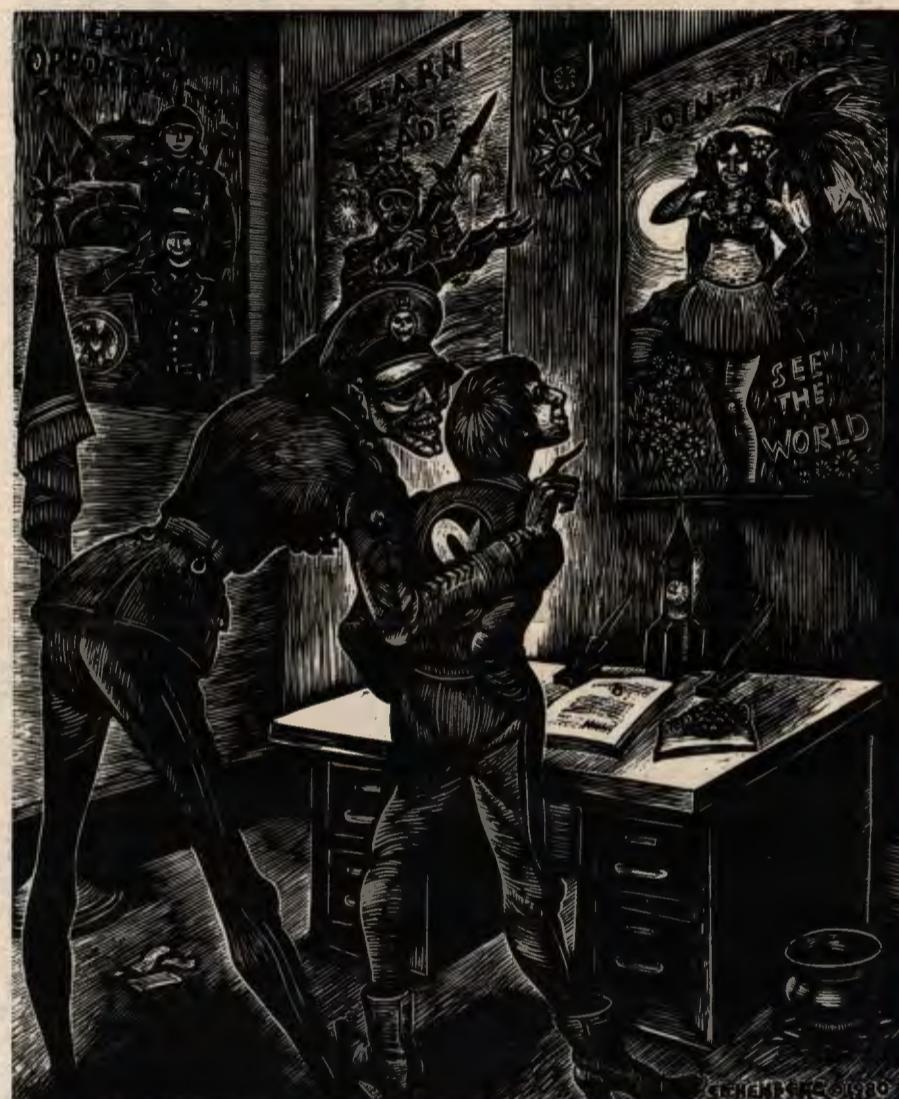
BW: Oh, I wanted to get out when I got in boot camp. Not because of the physical training and everything, but even there, you got a sense of the politics that were going on. I mean you hear things. And you can actually see things even there too, but as far as actually making up my mind to get out, I'd say it happened when I got stationed in Virginia Beach on the U.S.S. *America*. I was there for about three months when we got our first assignment—Grenada. Now, your first [time] on a boat in the military, you want to see something exciting, with some flowers and some beaches and things. No, we went over there, put the Marines there on land and started shooting up everything we saw, lost some planes on the boat, like we were in World War III. Right then, I thought, "Wait a minute, this isn't what they told me." You know, I actually went back to the chaplain and said, "Hey, wait, what is going on here? Going to General Quarters, we are supposed to be going on shore, drinking some beer, meeting some ladies!" He says, "No, we are in General Quarters because we are in a danger zone." I said, "What?"

On my orders it says, "Go see places." You know, we are going to go here and go there. I got this guarantee! Nothing is guaranteed! They'll put it down in writing; try to take them to court for false advertisement! *Nothing is guaranteed*. They'll tell you anything you want to hear. Sure, they'll tell you go there, they'll tell you can have this permanent duty station, schooling, or you put up one dollar, or put two dollars, and all this and that for school and all this—[then comes] wartime. Nothing is guaranteed!

LAM: Well, we're not at war.

BW: So we think. It's a private war. I call it their private war. That is the way I look at it. As far as we know over here, as far as what we see, and the media knows, no, we're not at war. But they're fighting all over there. I've been there. I saw it. There's wars going on that they don't even mention over here. Like when I was going through the Suez Canal, [there was] fighting in Egypt. We never found out about that until we were going through the Channel. I wrote home a couple of letters to find out what, if anything, was going on. They sent me some newsclippings, articles and everything. [They said] nothing was going on, nothing at all! I said, wait a minute! If this is going on and you all don't know about it, I wonder how many other things are going on that we don't know about, and we are not aware that we provoked! It just leaves you wondering. And after seeing a couple of things like that, I say: Wow, I gotta get out of here, have to get out of here. There will be a lot of wars. I'm going to be fighting wars over here that my people back home don't know nothing about. It's not worth it!

(These portions of the interview are printed by permission of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, which offers a variety of resources to help those facing draft registration or military service. For information, contact CCCO, 2208 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146, (215) 545-4626. Eds. note.)



To Learn a Trade

Fritz Eichenberg

"They're down there playin' games with these people."

But why drop detonators, trying to play with this thing, knowing [the Russians have] got more ships out there somewhere? You know [the Russians] are not going to be alone. Russian Bears [planes] fly over you. A Russian Bear is big. It's the most feared thing by the military. A Russian Bear. One of those bombs [they can drop] could sink ... I couldn't even say. They're dangerous. Once those ships and those planes came out they alerted [our] boat, they got everybody to man their battle stations. Everybody I talked to was scared. Actually scared. They didn't know what to think. You couldn't just brush it off and say, "Ya, we'll get 'em." Nobody was really that gung-ho about it. Everybody was going more or less like, "Oh man, I hope I make it home. I hope I make it home."

So this officer couldn't take it, what he saw and what he's been hearing about it. He said, "You all are crazy. Why do it? Why did you do it? The Russians didn't do nothin' to us. [They are] patrolling the waters like we're patrolling the waters." Things were just buildin' up and buildin' up. He just got a hold of one of the Mar-

do nothing wrong. They were flying. I guess they said they were out of air space. You know, it doesn't make sense. Air space, I don't know. I just wish everybody felt like I did.

LAM: Did you experience much racism while you were in the military?

BW: Yes! We had a lot of racial tension on our boat alone. Out of 6,000 males on one boat, you gotta try to work together. And here you are trying to deal with the politics on one side, racism on another side and the head game right in front of you. It's hard to do.

LAM: How so?

BW: One incident—we had a Petty Officer trying to [apply for] Chief. He was black. When you go up for Chief you gotta get recommended. He got a recommendation from a white friend he had. They were friends for a long time. He was a Chief, the white friend. Some of his buddies heard he had recommended a black person for Chief! They didn't take too kindly to that. They beat him up very bad. Very bad. He was hospitalized for two and a half weeks just because of that. You have, I don't know how many, stories on an aircraft carrier: don't get caught alone on the bottom of the boat

# Homesteads Completed

By DAVID BESEDA

At a time when more and more sushi bars and luxury condos are squeezing out the poor from the Lower East Side of New York City, a significant event was celebrated in mid-June. On the sidewalk and in the street in front of 702 Fifth Street, and 66 Avenue C, 300 community residents, homesteaders, priests, sisters and John Cardinal O'Conor offered prayers and songs of thanksgiving for the completion of a process that began in 1982 to turn these two formerly-abandoned buildings into beautiful apartments for some of the poor and homeless of the neighborhood.

The two renovated buildings are the first fully-completed, low-income, not-for-profit co-ops that have been rebuilt through the sponsorship of the Lower East Side Catholic Area Conference. These, and several other abandoned buildings, were acquired from the City of New York. The City had come to possess thousands of abandoned buildings as a result of tax default by their former owners.

## Renovation

The bulk of the work to renovate these buildings was done through the sweat and labor of neighborhood homesteaders and volunteers (See CW, August, 1984). The homesteaders are all low-income people in need of housing, and their sweat equity gives them the opportunity to secure a permanent home. The Churches in the area have raised some of the capital for materials, provided ongoing support and construction expertise. Religious orders, such as the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity have put in many hours on-site hammering, sawing,

hauling, painting, etc.

The homesteading work has truly become a community effort and a movement. More abandoned buildings are being homesteaded with workers from one building going over to help homesteaders from another building. Some people from the Catholic Worker have begun to homestead a building for homeless families.

Plans are underway to create a community land trust for abandoned lots and buildings in the neighborhood so that the properties may be held in trust for use by neighborhood residents, and kept from the hands of land speculators, and high cost housing developers.

However, the political powers that be in City government are generally opposed to any large-scale development of low-income housing. The Mayor even once said that maybe people who couldn't pay \$800 a month for a studio apartment shouldn't live in Manhattan. The City had wanted to give 80% of the abandoned, city-owned buildings in the Lower East Side to luxury developers, but the Churches, community organizations and housing activists and the local Community Board fought these plans and continue to fight to keep a greater portion of the properties for low-income projects.

Abandoned buildings all around the neighborhood have hand-painted signs on them recalling Woody Guthrie's words "This land is our land." The Churches have begun to answer the Gospel call to work for justice for the least of those among us and to reflect literally the words of the prophet Isaiah that "They shall rebuild the ancient ruins... and restore the ruined cities desolate now for generations." (Is. 61:4)

# Lighting the Lamps

By FRED GAREL

For a time we lived in various places on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Moving into the city from Queens - the country - to the old tenements of that day, mom was able to thrive while living with and in real poverty; and that was where we were. Very poor.

The trust and responsibility that was a part of a child's life then was evident in every part of our family's living. Looking for a place to live, and having no money, we moved to the Lower East Side. One apartment we had was gaslit, and that was an education in itself.

The gas jet for the wall lighting was a pipe about three-eighths of an inch in diameter that extended from the gas main into the room. The gas flow was controlled by a simple valve, a gas cock.

The burner nozzle was vertical. The mantle, an asbestos and cotton pouch about the size of a teabag, was placed over the nozzle and tied around its base. When a new mantle was to be lit, the gentle flow of the gas would puff out the mantle and the gas would be ignited. As the cotton part would "burn off" from the asbestos, the light would at first be bright - and then there would come the soft light of the gas itself, burning within its asbestos container.

But once the cotton (which had given structural strength to the asbestos and which, together with the asbestos, was "the mantle") burned off, the asbestos stood alone, and it was very fragile. Touched by a match or a strong breeze, it would crumble, disintegrate into ashes. If the gas was turned on and lit after the asbestos had disintegrated, it would flame up as a gas jet and not provide the illumination that it would have had with the mantle intact.

Simple - yet what progress beyond candles and kerosene lamps! Gaslight

was still very common in some sections of New York City in the 'twenties and 'thirties. What good fortune it was for me to have lived through the experience of lighting these lamps, and to have a trusting mother who would patiently instruct her son -

- how to place a strong chair to climb up on and to stand on;  
- to hold on to a box of "stove matches" at the ready to be used;  
- to open the box when once solidly standing, to remove one match and slide the box closed.

Then, the match solidly in a pudgy small-boy hand, to strike the match and, after it had lit, to reach up to turn on the gas and gently to hold the match flame near the gas-filled mantle.

And it would burst into light. What a trust to put into the heart and mind of a small boy!

What a thrill to me to be able to do this adult task and to know the trust involved.

And then, my mother's patience with me if I were to touch the mantle and it were to disintegrate: no anger, but patience.

"Now we will start over again," mom would say, a new mantle in hand.

And I would fit it over the gas jet and pudgy boy-fingers would tie the fragile string that drew the mantle sack closed. The ritual of how to make the light work would start all over again.

In the background, the gentle voice that was hers would be speaking about Faith - Prayer - and how the lighting of the gaslight is a solid example of Prayer, Faith (not of religion, that would have been too complicated and distracting, but of the beauty of Prayer-Faith), and the light that it gives when gently treated.

# Sheep ranch

(Continued from page 3)

water and power use.

All in all, it has been a place where people have, for the most part, been lovingly cared for. The land itself here, our mother, has healed us and taught us all.

Enough for what has been and what are our underpinnings. For the future, this is what we will be searching out:

- Increased spiritual rootedness.
- A new form of hospitality, and, if it can be accommodated here, a work focusing on mentally handicapped people. Beginning on Father's Day, a series of four one-week seminars are planned with approximately six mentally retarded adults each session, in which they will be incorporated into farm life, helping with the milking, making bread, candle-making,



Meinrad Craighead

etc.

- The soliciting of volunteers who specifically want to do this form of hospitality.

- Continued respite and retreat work, including confirmation classes, which now are coming.

- The development of a year's work plan for the farm so that our work, whether it is with guests, candles, farming, etc., is more in keeping with the seasons and the rhythm of the land here.

We deeply appreciate your continued interest, prayers and support. God's bountiful blessings on you and yours this year!

Fondly,

Joan Montesano and the farm folks.

# A Day Without Violence

"We Will Stand Up," a coalition of a hundred pro-life groups, is urging abortion clinics to close down during Pope John Paul's September 10-19 visit to the United States. The *ad hoc* action was initiated by Juli Loesch, founder of Pro-Lifers for Survival, a group which has promoted dialogue between pro-life and anti-war activists.

Another group, The Seamless Garment Network, working with "We Will Stand Up" is asking for a cessation of all anti-life actions, including the operation of the death penalty. "What we are asking for is a cease-fire - just one day without violence," stated Faye Kunce of the Seamless Garment Network. She likened the campaign to the cease-fires reached between warring factions during recent papal visits to other countries.

The Seamless Garment Network gets its names from a statement made by Cardinal Bernardin at Fordham University in November 1983 when he linked pro-life activity with the protection of life of those condemned to death by the state - as well as to the protection of the quality of life of the poorest members of the com-

# Y-Not Farm

(Continued from page 3)

is the direct manipulation of the farmers economy by the middleman and industrialists to make money at the expense of the real producer, the farmer.

Why do we, and most U.S. farmers, have to work off the farm to supplement our income? I'll give you some statistics to try and explain. I'll title it "Life in the U.S.A., Then and Now":

	1960	1987
Three bedroom home (average cost)	\$13,725	\$78,843
Average annual income	\$5,620	\$29,212
Gasoline, one gallon	31¢	84¢
New Ford car	\$2,143	\$9,120
Bread, 1 lb. loaf	20¢	63¢
Milk, ½ gallon	\$1.04	\$1.11

Milk has hardly gone up at all, and without price supports by the citizens, farmers could not make money producing milk under the present system. The price of farm crops has just not gone up through the decades as have other products. Most of the increase of the price of bread has gone to the middleman; the store owner and food packer, with no or little increase in the price of the grains within. Compare the increase of prices of a home, or factory-produced cars. Labor has benefited from some of these price increases through higher wages. So that's why farmers are working in the factories instead of on the soil which they love.

At present, the U.S. comprises about five percent of the earth's population, yet we're more than twelve percent of its best food-growing land. No other nation comes anywhere close to that ratio of people to good land. We hope to leave the soil, and our farm as a whole, in better condition than we found it. We are convinced a healthy soil is at the heart of a healthy farm and of a healthy community as a whole. And this is why we continually ask you to support organic, regenerative agriculture. The great majority of people who do not farm should realize their dependence on farmers who have made a commitment to right livelihood on the land.

As Wendell Berry eloquently states: "The care of the earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our only legitimate hope. Soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age to youth, death into life."

Peace,  
Len Prelnsnik

munity. The Cardinal echoed the following Pax Christi statement of June 1981 with which many advocates of nonviolence associate themselves:

"All life is a gift of God, our Creator."

"Pax Christi, U.S. branch of the International Catholic Movement for Peace, affirms the inviolability and sanctity of human life as the undergirding of a truly humane social order. From the early years of Christianity, a ban on abortion was enunciated and maintained, along with the condemnation of capital punishment. Christians were also forbidden to take part in the organized killing of warfare. A telling query by Athanagoras, a theologian of the second century A.D., is significant in revealing the moral stance of Christians before the just war criteria were borrowed from pre-Christian sources. Athanagoras asked, 'How could we kill a man - we who say that women who take drugs to produce abortion are guilty of murder?' Pax Christi, in common with the early followers of Jesus, views the protection of all life, from its conception to its end, as a 'seamless garment.'