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ST. HEINRAD INDIANA

Vol. LIII, No. 7

October-November, 1986

Subscription:
25¢ Per Year

Price 1¢

Her Name Was Mercy

By JANE SAMMON

Given her skill as a physician, Sr. Mercy Hirshboeck could have easily had a lucrative private medical practice, her friend Marj Humphrey recounted shortly after Sr. Mercy's death at the age of 83. But Marj pointed out that Mercy never received a "fee" for her work, maybe a chicken or some eggs, perhaps a few pieces of fruit, depending on the country, climate, or the life of the different poor people she served in her life as a Maryknoll missionary.

Her name was Mercy, and she "knew" her name. The Bible says that knowledge is the intimate relationship one has to someone or something. Certainly Sr. Mercy was well acquainted with the works of mercy. It was evident in the touch of her hand, and the fervor with which she prayed for the world.

In the chapel of the sisters' apartment on Avenue C in Manhattan, she would sit in the armchair, affectionately known as "Mercy's chair," next to the window that overlooks the loud and phrenetic avenue. On entering the living room, one would often stop short to gaze at her silhouetted in the distance of the far room, slouched somewhat forward, head bowed, elbows resting on either arm of the chair, fingers meeting at the center of her forehead, slightly oblivious to her surroundings. There was much for her to pray for in these difficult times: drugs hawked on the street below, police chases, fire sirens keening their ominous tune as they sped past the window, U.S. intervention in Central America, nuclear weapons, star wars, the life of the neighborhood, the life of the world. Was not this the reason she had come to this area at the age of 70, with Sr. Regina McEvoy of happy memory, and Sr. Eileen McIntyre? Had Mercy not said that these last years, attempting to live a life of contemplation in the midst of New York City, were the fulfillment of her vocation?

Holy Mentors

A few holy mentors gave inspiration and example for their beginnings on the Lower East Side. Among them was Charles de Foucauld with his great emphasis on the hidden life of Jesus in Nazareth, both the small and insignificant tasks of daily routine and then leaving the workplace, the kitchen, parish house, or nursing home, to sit in the presence of the Eucharist.

There had been observances over the years that brought many of us together in their little chapel. The second of December, special to Maryknoll sisters, recalls the martyrdom in 1980 of the four church women in El Salvador. Less known, but observed quietly by her friends, was that same date in December when, in 1922, the car in which Mercy was a passenger, went off the road, killing her close friend, and the father of this same young companion. For Mercy, then a nineteen year old Marquette student, there was no doubt that God had spared her for the work that lay ahead, the fields afar. She would become the first doctor of the Maryknoll sisters. Her hands would be used in the most desolate and remote places, terrain common to the lifework of a missionary. These hands

(Continued on page 7)

EMMANUEL MOUNIER, PERSONALIST

By BILL GRIFFIN

The philosophy of the Catholic Worker movement begins, in part, with the recognition that modern, mass society's materialist conception of what it means to be a human being is fundamentally wrong. The marxists and the capitalists both, in their own ways, deform the person by rejecting the spiritual. Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin were not the only thinkers in the 1930's to take this position. During the same period, in France, there was Emmanuel Mounier.

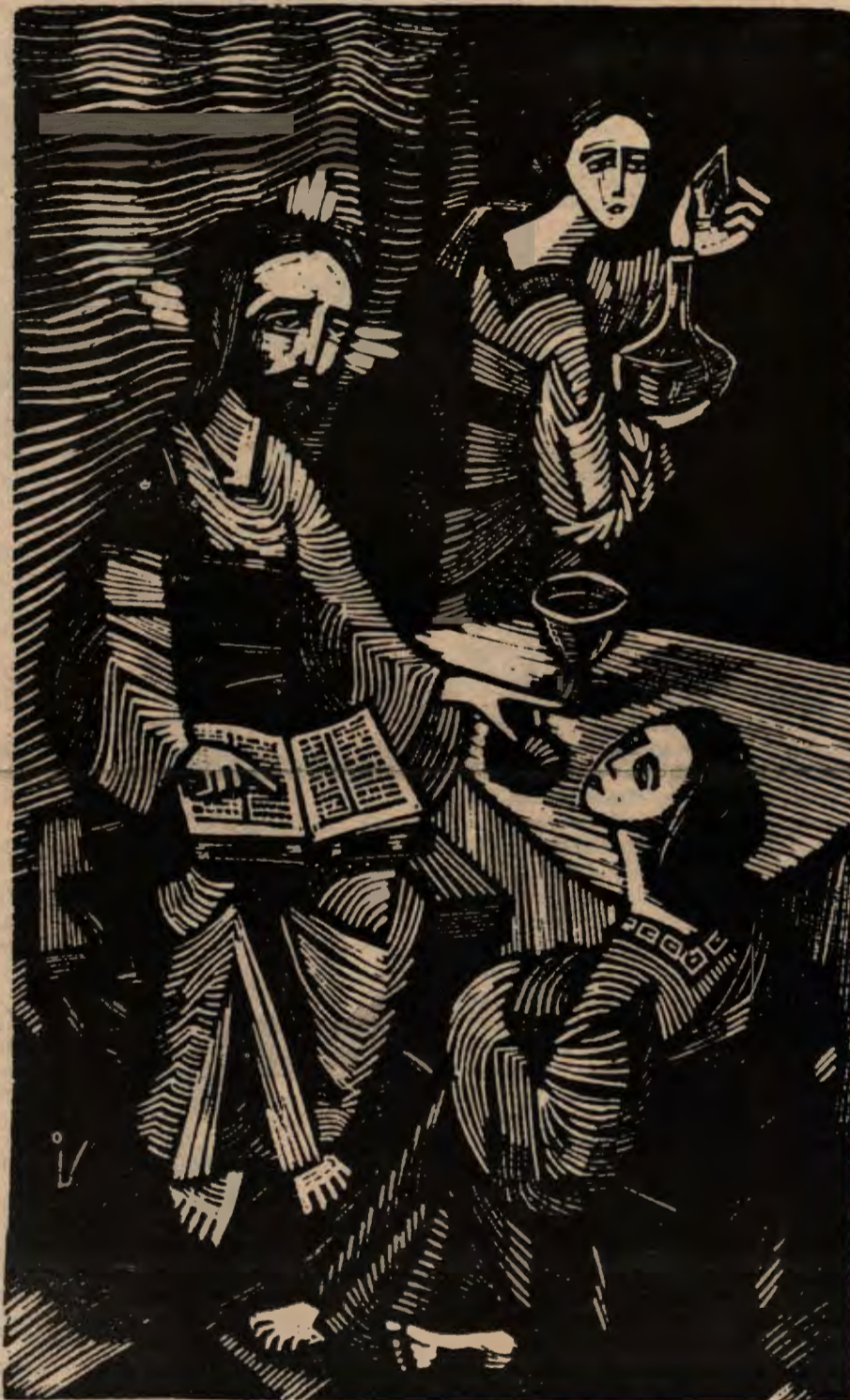
Dorothy and Peter had already started The Catholic Worker newspaper when they first heard of Mounier. They immediately sensed their kinship with this philosopher and writer who claimed that his was "une philosophie combattante," that is, a philosophy that waged its combat not for a place in the universities, but in the hearts of everyday working people. Dorothy and Peter must have been strengthened in their own beliefs when they heard how Mounier and *Esprit*, the new journal of thought that he and his friends started, were loudly and clearly protesting the separation of the material from the spiritual as Dorothy and Peter were doing, during those early, cruel years of the Great Depression.

Emmanuel Mounier had given up an academic career as a professional teacher and turned to his own special kind of journalism to analyze in depth and confront the social injustices, the unemployment and the militarism that were tearing his country apart. But Mounier did not confine himself within rigid political plans of action. His approach was theoretical. He developed a deeper, more dynamic and creative conception of the Person. Mounier's aim was to restore reverence for the human person in all the political and social debates that were then raging. Yet, if his work was mainly theoretical, it also had crucial practical applications, and Peter Maurin saw in Mounier's philosophy of Personalism the foundation for a new society.

He was born in 1905 in Grenoble, France, near the Alps. The family was of the middle class; his father was a pharmacist. Peasant roots in the soil, however, were strong, for all his grandparents had been farmers. As a child, Mounier was meditative, studious and somewhat solitary. His parents directed him toward medical studies to draw him toward the practical side of life. Following their wishes, he enrolled in 1921 as a science major at the University of Grenoble. For three years he struggled with biology, physics and chemistry, but then, after a "luminous retreat" in 1924, he felt called to study philosophy.

Mounier's parents were devout Roman Catholics and his own religious life was intense, by all accounts. During his time at the university he was very actively involved in the student retreat movement, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. But Mounier was, early on, aware that mainstream French Catholicism was imprisoned in a middle class ghetto, and he struggled to integrate his faith with the needs of the society and the times he lived in. One of his professors reported that, "it was Mounier who invited me to a student study group in St. Laurence parish, one of the poorest working-class par-

(Continued on page 2)



Martha and Mary

Brother Lavrans

A Prayer for October 3rd

By FELTON DAVIS

(October 3rd marked the first anniversary of the restarting of Unit I of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant. To mark the event, Felton Davis went to General Public Utilities, in Parsippany, NJ, which own the plant, and there painted "SHUT DOWN TMI" across walls and the entrance sign. After pleading no contest, he was sentenced to one year in jail. He is currently incarcerated in the Morris County Jail, 23 Court Street, Morristown, NJ 07960. Eds. note.)

Once again I come to this hidden place with hidden questions for a hidden God. Or are You not in hiding? Why is it only here that I feel right in asking You these questions? Am I not allowed to call out to You from everywhere, to "pray without ceasing?"

Six years have passed since the accident at Three Mile Island. Six years since the prospect of a desolate, uninhabited Northeast was held out for all of us to contemplate. Six years, and where has our horror gone? Was the accident our warning? Was it You Who closed the valve that was supposed to be open, You Who confused the poor control room operators, You Who blew a bubble of hydrogen into the core? Did You do all that to wake us up to the danger? How much more frightened must we become? I know many people who are scared of Three Mile Island. Will You send some of them here to be with me, so we can ask questions of each other as well as of You?

The disciples of Jesus were jailed, and they rejoiced to think that they might be worthy of suffering disgrace for "The Name." (Acts 5:41) Was that Your Name? Did You in-

(Continued on page 5)

Vol. LIII, No. 7

October-November, 1986

CATHOLIC WORKER

Published eight times a year: January-February, March-April, May, June-July, August, September, October-November, December
ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC WORKER MOVEMENT

DOROTHY DAY, PETER MAURIN, Founders
(1897-1980) (1877-1949)

Managing Editor: TIM LAMBERT. Editors: FRANK DONOVAN, JANE SAMMON, KATHARINE TEMPLE.

Contributing Editors: BILL ANTALICS, BERNARD CONNAUGHTON, RITA CORBIN, EILEEN EGAN, ARTHUR J. LACEY, MATTHEW LEE, DEANE MOWRER, ROBERT PETERS, PAM QUATSE.

Circulation: HARVEY HEATH, PRESTON LEWIS, JEANNETTE NOEL, MARION SPINELLI, PAUL TROYANO, SUE TROYANO.

Editorial communications, new subscriptions and changes of address:
36 East First Street, New York; N.Y. 10003

Telephone (212) 254-1640

THE CATHOLIC WORKER (ISSN 0008-8463) is published eight times a year: subscription rates: United States, 25¢ yearly, Foreign 30¢ yearly, by The Catholic Worker, 36 East First St., NY, NY 10003. Second class postage paid at NY, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Catholic Worker, 36 East First St., NY, NY 10003.

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EMMANUEL MOUNIER

(Continued from page 1)

ishes in Grenoble." The priest in charge of this parish also remembered that Mounier, as a university student, felt the need to personally confront the misery and destitution in the worst neighborhoods of Grenoble.

Mounier was developing a perspective on religion which was very different from the dominant, cultural one in France at that time. Mounier was not impressed with Catholicism because of its ability to gather huge crowds and organize massive processions. He was coming to feel that those who were left out, forgotten and absent, especially the factory workers, were supremely important. Mounier refused to be complacent in the security that religious faith can give.

The Gospels meant a great deal to him. To a university friend he advised, "Read the Gospels for their powerful content. Forget about the timid, shrinking violet commentaries." And he stated in another letter, "My Gospel is the Gospel of the poor." Later in life Mounier was brought to conclude, "Since my wife, my children and I cannot be part of the communion of the poor and the abandoned, I want us to be, at least, members of their Third Order... so that we may receive some crumbs from their table." Regard and love for the poor was very much part of Mounier's character and was a frequent theme in his writings.

Formative Influences

In 1927 he went to Paris to continue his studies. There he met and became friends with Jacques Maritain, Gabriel Marcel, Louis Massignou and Nicholas Berdyaev, the writers and thinkers who contributed to what was later named the Catholic Revival. After much searching

for a subject for his thesis, Mounier decided to write on the thought of Charles Peguy.

Emmanuel Mounier's contact with the thought of Charles Peguy was a great turning point in his life. From the writing of his thesis on, Mounier felt he was Peguy's spiritual heir, and, very concretely, this is what led him to stop pursuing an academic career and embark on his own "spiritual revolution."

The social and political climate in France was similar to the one that confronted Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in the United States. The economic collapse of 1929 had brought widespread unemployment and despair to millions of people. Ideologies on the right and left of the political spectrum were mobilizing men and women into larger and larger impersonal collectivities by promising them the world. The bourgeoisie was barricaded behind its wealth, and the Catholic Church, as an institution, was perceived to be aligned with the status quo and was being abandoned by the working class. This "abandonment of the Church by the proletariat was the greatest scandal of the 20th century," Mounier wrote. We can detect in these words the determined tones of a committed Christian who, like Peter Maurin, wanted to "blow the dynamite in the Christian message."

In 1932 Mounier got his chance. After much discussion with university friends and other Catholic intellectuals, notably Jacques Maritain, the group that shared Mounier's vision launched the publication named *Esprit*. The rallying cry of the group and the theme of the first issues was supplied by Maritain. In the midst of economic chaos, *Esprit* declared

(Continued on page 8)

FRIDAY NIGHT MEETINGS

In keeping with Peter Maurin's recognition of the need for ongoing clarification of thought, we invite you to join us for our weekly Friday night meetings. The meetings are held at either Maryhouse - 55 East Third St., (212) 777-9617, or St. Joseph House - 36 East First St., (212) 254-1640. As much as we can see ahead, those we will hold at First St. will be marked with an asterisk (*). Both houses are between First and Second Avenues (2nd Ave. stop on the F train).

November 7 - Tom Lewis: The Artist as Resister and Creator of Hope.

November 14 - Bill Griffin: Emmanuel Mounier, Personalist.*

November 21 - Schola: Songs of Peace and Justice.

November 28 - No meeting. Happy Thanksgiving!

December 5 - Roundtable Discussion on Anarchism.

December 12 - Msgr. William H. Shannon: The Hidden Ground of Love, Letters of Thomas Merton.

December 19 - Carmen Matthews: A Christmas Reading.

December 26 - No meeting. Merry Christmas!

MEETINGS BEGIN AT 7:30 P.M.

St. Joseph House

By ROBERT PETERS

I can personally attest to the old saying, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder," for it was anticipatory partiality and love that brought me home again to St. Joseph House last April, after my stay of nine months with the Atonement Friars in Graymoor, New York. I felt it the first moment I ever walked through our battered, graffiti-covered door - and I feel it occasionally every now and then - what can only be described as a presence, the essential rightness of my being here, of everything and everyone, being here.

These days are difficult ones for our community. About a year ago our newspaper published three articles pertaining to AIDS, homosexuality and gay rights. This, in turn, has led to a heightened awareness within our houses that much important, albeit at times painful, discussion and clarification of thought were needed. For the past year, we have talked and shared ideas and visions, not only about questions the articles raised, but also about the responsibility and accountability of each of us towards one another. As this process continued in spurts, tensions came to a head this past summer, when, out of both frustration and necessity, meetings were organized and a day of spiritual recollection arranged. Our editorial masthead has seen some names come and go, without much explanation. It seems to me, now, as though almost everything is in question in many ways, and, for some people, there is much anger, fear and pain. Our

other matters. It is with sadness that she leaves now, as we know Peggy resolutely as a person of solid practical advice, with a depth of knowledge about the Worker and a commitment to the poor, both here and in Central America. I know her as a friend and a person I love. Peggy will be living close by and will stay among us as discussions continue, though she is working elsewhere. She has been, and is, a woman of strength for many, who now recognizes within herself the need to find strength, and to make decisions.

Also moving on at this time is Matthew, who will be "roughing it" by working at the homestead on Sixth Street, and doing tenant organizing work out in East New York. Matthew has brought fresh insights, enthusiastic idealism and much energy to St. Joseph House. He has a special gift for "being with people" and sharing struggles, hopes and dreams. We all have much to be thankful to Matthew for, hope that the winter treats him kindly and that we see him often.

Unheralded Saints

The other day, while taking the newspaper to the Post Office, Alan from Maryhouse said to me that "community life is the torture test of love" and I was quite quick to agree with him, as we shared people and episodes of life which literally drove us both completely up our respective walls. On the other hand, we do have our share of grace-filled moments, and a multitude of truly wonderful people around here. Some of these folks are better known as the "hidden saints of St. Joseph House" because of their remarkable quality of remaining (for the most part) unheralded, that is, until now! These "saints" follow the Little Way, doing all those small things, which, as we all should know, are, in essence, the most important. I believe that the roof would fall in on our heads if it weren't for them, and so...there's Arthur, faithful answerer of phone and mail and now the "proud papa" of Ursula's (our newest resident feline) kittens, born in the mailbox under his desk; Joe, the dishwasher, who has brought peace to many a Catholic Worker (as things got seriously "out of control," at least the dishes weren't piling up to the ceiling also); Brother Paul, caretaker of our backyard and patron to hungry pigeons everywhere, which are fed with a mysterious recipe of old bread and soup, known to B.P. alone; Dottie, Sr. Robert Marie and Harvey Heath, all workers with Preston on the second floor "paper processing plant"; Fred Garel, our afternoon blessing, provider of both good cooking and joyful fellowship; Joe Monroe, an old time CW'er and giver of encouragement and laughter to our daily toil; Melissa, our great soupline volunteer, whose pretty smile at 8:00 a.m. makes one realize that mornings aren't that awful; Bob Johnson, who makes the soup on Sunday mornings (I mean doing anything on Sunday morning!); Ed Forand, whose pre-morning sandwiches are a godsend and who continues in holiness with John and Carlos as our early morning coffee makers. Finally, there's Frank, who does everything from bringing the mail, to reminding us which days the garbage goes out! There are many, many more "saints" among us no doubt, but I'll probably be in hot water for this hagiography, so I'll stop here.

It was with delight that we welcomed back, for a short time, Dennis Leder S.J., who spoke at our first Friday Night Meeting of the season on his experiences with Salvadoran refugees living in Honduras. It was a prayer - for understanding and for peace (Although I must confess that most of the meeting for me was spent

(Continued on page 8)



Doorpost Ornament

M. Eileen Lawter

meetings are now focused on the future visions of the Catholic Worker (at least the New York CW), but some people are also questioning, among other things, the relationship of the CW to the teachings of the Church; as we state in our Aims and Means, "we seek our strength and direction...in studying and applying the traditions of Scripture and the teachings of the Church to the modern condition." (CW May, 1983) Some people are coming to personal decisions at this time, and one naturally wonders about the connection between a person's departure and the dialectic among us. That might be unfair, and yet we seem caught, each of us in our own way, following our own conscience, to be in a situation with no easy answers. And so, at this time we continue to discuss, to clarify, to pray and to grow together as best we can.

Peggy, recently our co-managing editor, long time editor and even longer time Catholic Worker has decided to take a leave of absence, a leave of presence, over the next few months at least, as she, and we, discover our direction on these and

A Matter of Compassion on Trial

By DAVID BESEDA

Last summer, I attended a court hearing set to decide the fate of 150 elderly and handicapped homeless women who were to be thrown out of a city-run shelter. While sitting in the stately old courtroom, I looked up at the big, brass lettering on the wall above the judge's bench, and, giggling quietly, read, "In God We trust." It seemed that the court had accidentally betrayed itself and removed any doubt about whether its decisions are really based upon any trust in God. After all, God has put His money on losers more than a few times.

Legal decisions trust in facts, laws, logic, politics, economics. The judge, who operates on the basis of these tangibles, is put into an awkward position when the court is asked to deal with a matter which should be decided mainly on the basis of compassion and empathy. On this particular day, lawyers representing some of the women were hoping to convince the judge that he should stop the city from closing down one of its shelters that was situated in a relatively satisfactory building. (It wasn't great but a bit better than some.) Most of the women seeking mercy from the court were disabled, and many had lived in this shelter for three years. But the welfare department had decided that they wanted this building for another purpose, and plans were thus made to move everyone about twenty miles away to a large, run-down National Guard armory, where they would have to sleep in one big room with no privacy, compete for too few toilets, and be left with no recreation or lounge areas.

The lawyers representing the homeless women argued in court that a forced move to an old, dirty warehouse was a deprivation of their rights. Plus, the lawyers stated, such a move would leave many women traumatized; some might be driven back out onto the streets; others would lose the progress they had made through local job training and supportive programs. In opposition, the lawyers representing the city government were surprisingly frank in their arguments. "Your honor," they said, "we are only bound by law to provide a bed to these women in a shelter, but we are not bound to care for them. And, although the building we are moving them into is not as nice as the one they are in now, we are not bound by law to a certain quality of shelter, nor to any high level of care."

After hearing the two sides argue, the judge said he was sorry for any inconvenience caused to these women, but he was going to allow the city to close the shelter. He said that he felt the city was faced with a mammoth task in trying to care for its homeless, and he believed the government was doing its best, even if that meant several hundred homeless people would have to sleep on an armory drill floor in a dilapidated building.

So, there you have it. A city government runs a dangerous, dirty, dehumanizing shelter system, and still the court will decide that people who are homeless have a legal right to be provided only emergency shelter by the city, but high standards and conditions it cannot set.

For as long as the municipal shelter system has existed, intolerable treatment has been its hallmark. Back in 1933, Peter Maurin wrote:

...so people no longer consider hospitality to the poor a personal duty. And it does not disturb them a bit to send them to the city where they are given the hospitality of the "Muni" at the expense of the taxpayer. But the hospitality that the "Muni" gives to the down and out is no hospitality, because what comes from the taxpayers' pocketbooks does not come from their hearts.

That's what the Catholic Worker and other groups were about, when they began houses of hospitality to receive people into a place of love, warmth, community, dignity and healing. And the charity has multiplied and lives have been changed. Yet, there has never been enough room in any such house to welcome in all those who seek help at the door. In New York City alone, it is estimated that there are more than 20,000 single individuals without a place to live,

with, at most, room for only about 500 people in all the non-city shelters put together. In the "new society within the shell of the old" there is, unfortunately, room for a mere few. The other day, my three-year-old son asked me why Noah took only two animals of each kind into the ark, and what did all of the other animals do, to deserve to drown?

I feel somewhat the same about all the thousands of people who cannot find refuge in the few decent places available.



To Build Up the Kingdom

By JEANNETTE NOEL

Dorothy Day, in her passionate love of the Gospel, left us a precious legacy, and not only to the Catholic Worker, but to all peoples. What stood out most in her life was the fact that she showed the Gospel to be possible in everyday life. She didn't preach it, she was a witness to it. She didn't stand apart and plead the cause of the poor and oppressed; she did not simply live among them; she served them, even went to jail for them.

This does not mean that Dorothy was never discouraged. Not at all. But she did not give up easily. When the burden became heavy, Dorothy would weep and wonder if the whole thing was worth while. She would feel that things had become "unhinged" and we all have known such times. When the bedlam of the houses of hospitality overwhelmed her, she wept — wept over her own hardness of heart. Once, when Pat and Kathleen Jordan found her in such a state they tried to offer sympathy. "Don't pity me," she said, quietly but firmly, with a stunning capacity for transcendence that took their breath away.

As Dan Berrigan stated so well, "Dorothy was not satisfied to tend the wounds of the poor. She wondered why, in a country rich in resources, a child of God should lie by the wayside unattended, passed by, scorned by most." She saw this happening not only in New York City, but all over the world. Dorothy remembered the parable of Jesus revealing the true love of neighbor, as she knelt

and lifted the head of an afflicted one. This simple act was extended, transformed and became her life, her destiny, as she opened her eyes and heart to the misery of the poor and oppressed. She prayed, cried out and came to see that their tragedy was not accidental. All were, in fact, being cut down by the main business of the modern world, the business of war.

Dorothy, a prophet of our time, dared to challenge the Church at a time when pacifism was not spoken of. She encouraged draft resistance and spoke out strongly on the subject. She knew from history that peace could not be achieved by war. She saw the horrible effects war had on the human race: God's creation destroyed, the shattered lives of men and women, the suffering of innocent children. She grieved, especially, at the sufferings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. It was puzzling to her that ordinary people would not think of throwing another person into a raging fire, yet we, as a nation, so easily threw down fire on so many, and their children. War not only destroys human life, but brings about the dehumanization of the destroyers. How is it possible to follow Jesus, Who told us to love our enemy, while proceeding to kill that same so-called enemy? Yes, Dorothy believed in the revolutionary pacifism of Jesus.

Dorothy also had the ability to foster a sense of family in community. To her, family and community were never class relationships, but a genuine effort to give to the poor a sense of their own dignity as

homeless people who don't stay on the streets spend their time in city shelters — pushed around by security guards, deprived of privacy or space, left in their loneliness to sleep in dirty, often rodent-infested, congregate rooms. The same is true for the more than 5,000 homeless families in this city. Last week, for instance, I met Barbara C., whose son is autistic, cannot speak or feed himself. Caring for him in her own home was hard enough, but when she lost her apartment because of a building fire, she had no place to turn except the welfare department. There was no room in any of the churches, as those few shelters were full. The city first sent them to cots on a gymnasium floor with 300 other men, women and children. A few days later, the city managed to move Barbara and her son into a hotel room with a broken window, broken toilet, and collapsing ceiling.

I am not sure where this leaves the Christian who tries to practice personalism and political anarchism, and who agitates for social justice. Is it enough just to try and care for those around you? Should the courts be used to insure reforms and combat injustice? Jesus related in one parable that even the unjust judge was forced to respond to the widow because of her perseverance. Yet, can city government ever be forced to be compassionate and respectful to the poor, to reinstate the disenfranchised? That is probably impossible, given the nature of government to enthrone the rich and to put down the humble and homeless.

Perhaps, though, it's evading the point to read the parable of the unjust judge simply as an appeal to the "safe" but impersonal judiciary system, for it ends by saying, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man returns, will He find faith on earth?" Perhaps the cry of the widow in our city for vindication comes directly from, and to, God's people as well as to God. The suffering of the homeless poor at the hands of the government's welfare system calls upon our conscience not to search for layers of checks and balances to filter the cry, but to come up with more faith and courage, more prayer and personal action.

children of God. For her, the celebration of the Eucharist was a celebration of life. Dorothy carried this sense of celebration to the houses of hospitality. She knew people could not live on bread alone. The best of meals, given coldly, do not satisfy the hunger of those who come to us in need. They also hunger for human warmth. They experience the hunger of loneliness, the hunger of homelessness. In this, our meals can be an extension of the Eucharist. The poor come to know us in the breaking of the bread. We know them in the breaking of the bread, and we know Christ in the breaking of the bread, both the Christ of Calvary and the risen Christ of Easter morning.

It did not stop there, at feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, housing the homeless, caring for the sick, visiting those in prison, burying the dead. Dorothy symbolized the Christian responsibility to build up the kingdom of God. It is a kingdom characterized by compassion, justice, peace and mercy. She incarnated the social teachings of the Church. She read the social encyclicals of the popes and took them seriously as she set about spreading their message of hope, and saving countless lives from tragedy. Dorothy's militancy was the militancy of nonviolence. She chose the sword of the spirit. She stood by a faith that is stronger than the bombs of the warmakers.

Her entire life provides the setting for a testing of love that burns through suffering and struggle. If love is a weakness, then her weakness was her greatest strength.

Dorothy challenges us to love God, unconditionally, and to love each other as He loves us. Do we dare risk this challenge?

No Holy War

By MSGR. BRUCE KENT

(Msgr. Kent is the former general secretary of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in England, and his article originally appeared in THE TABLET, 48 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HB, England. Eds. note.)

Military chaplains may not be overjoyed to find this article coming from this pen. I ask them to believe that in what follows there is no suggestion that they do not fulfill a very difficult pastoral role in an area where it is certainly needed. To suggest anything else would be ungenerous and untrue. I have, myself, personal debts of gratitude to pay to some of the chaplains I met during my military service. Where today, I wonder, is the quiet and sensible priest who, long ago at Bovington, as I wrestled with the 19 set, and its extraordinary valves, fed me with Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* and plenty of useful advice as well?

My concern today does not relate to the pastoral role of military chaplains, though I would certainly wish to suggest that there are other parts of the Christian family who might have pastoral care as well. There are many chaplains inside military bases, but not very many charged with the pastoral care of those camped outside them or with the wider work of the peace organizations. But priorities in pastoral care are not, of course, decided by the military chaplains.

Church and State

The problem that concerns me is the identification of Church and State. It is not a problem that exclusively concerns military chaplains. We are all responsible for a climate in which acceptance of national policies is regarded as the norm for us even as Christians. Nevertheless, all over the world the evidence is that military chaplains find it much easier to provide pastoral care than to raise moral problems relating to national policies.

Often, it is not believed that there are problems. That becomes clear enough in Gordon Zahn's remarkable 1969 study of role tension, *Chaplains in the RAF*. In 1915, the then Bishop of London, who was also a military chaplain, said in the newspaper article: "You ask for my advice in a sentence as to what the Church is to do. I answer, mobilise the nation for a holy war." The idea of the holy war is still very much alive. The senior chaplain to the South African forces made his views clear in his 1979 Christmas message: "Our Defense Force serves the Christ of Christmas and takes up arms to defend this Christmas patron. . . . In this time, no conscientious objector and no pacifist can kneel before the crib of Bethlehem with a clear conscience." So much for apartheid. During the "dirty war" in the Argentine, as Andrew Graham Youll recounts in *Portrait of an Exile*, a priest went to a military chaplain to ask for help. The reply was that this was a crusade against evil and that he should pray for the government's victory. Subsequently, he was murdered. Canon Oestreicher, in the summer of 1966, met and discussed the Vietnam war and indiscriminate attacks with one of the senior chaplains to the United States Air Force. His comment was: "If the State Department and the Pentagon think we've got to go through with it, who am I to question their judgment?"

Perhaps one of the most remarkable comments on the Church-State relationship, illuminating the atmosphere of the Church of the day, came from Fr. George Zabelka, who served on Tinian Island and was one of those who bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "I was brain-

(Continued on page 6)

Soldiers and Protesters

The Night Watch at Mutlangen

By AMY CROSS

Mutlangen seems like a lonely place. Mist crawls across the open fields from the last ridges of the forest to its quiet streets. For such a small West German village the streets are wide and well paved, an improvement the U.S. Armed Forces paid for.

It used to be farmers could graze their sheep on the grounds of the base. It used to be a young girl would wave at the pilots as she cut across the runway on her way swimming. The young girl is now an angry woman with a cold stare toward the fence and razor wire that surrounds the entire perimeter of the base. Within, the United States servicemen feel they are under siege.

They are there to keep Pershing II nuclear missiles safe, to keep peace. At the gate, others keep a vigil against this kind of peace, every hour of every day, wanting to make the world safe from the Pershing II.

Another night passes in this stand-off between peace keepers and peace campers. At the peace camp the police radio is being monitored. The typewriter is hammering out SOS patterns, and many people are waiting.

At 2:30 a.m. I turn my back on the scene and walk in the other direction. Down the road a quarter mile is the gate. Before it lies a row of bundled bodies in dead center of the road the missile convoy takes from the base. Exposed to the cold, the gravel, the bare brunt of the guard light, they protest with their sleeplessness or fitful dreams.

I come to the mesh of chained links, coated in some plastic that is supposed to slow bolt cutters. The German woman, whose childhood memories these were, is with me. She asks with disbelief, "How are you going to get them to talk to us?"

"Well, I don't know, maybe if we stand here they'll hear us and recognize my American accent. . . ." I say, for once trying to recall my Kansas twang.

My accent has already crossed the barrier. From the darkened guard house two booted, olive-bound figures drift our way. With their impressive rifles slung back, they shuffle into the light.

Jim is from Arkansas, I find out as he plants himself in front of me. He rocks back on his heels, thumbs anchored in his belt loops, as he reassures me, "I know these weapons will never be used."

I can feel the German woman's teeth grind shut. In the glare of the guard light I can see the knotted muscles of her clenched jaw. The soldier, growing uneasy in the silence, begins again. "I don't know what you're all making a fuss about. It didn't used to be like this. It's just a new model, a little faster, better. Pretty soon this'll all die down. People will get used to it, just like they did the last one. It's just a better model of the same thing. There ain't nothin' to be afraid of."

"You mean it's kind of like a new model of a car?"

"Yeah."

I accept that with a noncommittal "Mmm hmm."

My German friend stands there, knowing that the improvements have increased the range of the missiles so that they can now reach the capital of the Soviet Union and have decreased the flight time to six minutes, so that, as we speak, Soviet computers are looking on us as primary targets, ready to "launch on warning" at us — some improvement. She listens to me fill in the gaps in his explanations with more Mmm hmm's.

My friend was beginning to wonder which side I was on. "Mmm hmm," I must have said for the fiftieth time.

I remember laughing a little, digging

at a stone with my toe, trying not to think about the cold, trying not to feel intimidated by the light on the razor wire as we talk.

Jim doesn't like Germany, "Hey, send me home tomorrow," he says, sounding indispensable. I tease him when he tells me he's here to defend his country, "Oh, come on, you just wanted a job."

"So, what's wrong with that?"

Other Germans come and drift away. Jim looks at them nervously. He tells me he never relaxes when he is out with the missile convoy. There is too much pressure. Again he asks me what all the fuss is about.

"Come back tomorrow, you can see us practice on the airfield. There's no secret about it. We're not trying to hide anything. Come back and see."

The hour passes. Jim no longer swaggers. He says sure, he can understand how people would be upset with these big convoys rumbling through their streets at all hours of the day and night.

He shoots a glance at the Germans in a circle around me. "What do they think, anyway?" he asks again. I begin to think of an answer and then realize they can speak for themselves. I turn to a startled young man on my right and say, "I don't know, what do you think?"

He squirms, looks at the guy behind the fence. Does he dare? He takes a step back and mumbles something polite. Jim says he can't understand him. He asks me to ask them his question. I repeat what he says in English. They respond in English, which I then repeat again across the fence, translating English into English for people who all speak the language fluently.

Nerves seem raw on both sides. Words may not be clear, but the hurt and distrustful shyness can be seen in everyone's eyes. We're all standing around in half-shadows with accusations, wondering why any of us are here.

Jim is a little curious about my travels. Strangely enough, it sounds like what the Army promised him at the beginning. You can't miss the sarcasm in his voice when he says, "Don't you watch TV? It's not a job, it's an adventure."

I tell him I've come to Europe to find

out what people really think about the missiles, and that I am confused about what peace is. And when I tell him how frustrating it is to hear the same excuses and complaints over and over again, getting nowhere. I even tell him sometimes I want to write off politicians and the military, East and West, as beyond the reach of any of my fears and questions.

"You know?" I ask him, and am startled when I raise my eyes to his.

He begins to tell me what he thinks about. "I mean, there's Revelations, and what's that supposed to mean?"

Look, when he signed up for this he didn't know what he was getting into. Pershing II — he thought it was some missile in a silo like all the rest. He didn't know he'd have to drive it all over the countryside. He didn't know. He didn't think Germany would be like this — these people standing over there snickering at him, pointing fingers at him over their shoulders. He knows they're laughing at him. And it really makes him angry and there's nothin' he can do about it. What do they want? He really wants to know.

This man is pleading with me, with an automatic rifle strapped to his back. I hope silence will take the hurt from his eyes, but it doesn't.

"I think they are afraid like you are; and don't know what to do or who is in control."

That sinks into both of us for awhile. Jim breaks the silence, "You know, I don't think we'll make it fifteen years. I think it's gonna blow. And I sure as hell don't want to be the one who pushes the button."

I'm looking at Jim through the links, wide awake. I remember how the conversation started. I accepted what he said then, I can't do much more than that now.

The radio crackles; there is a crunch of boots behind Jim. His replacement has come. He can now get some sleep for four hours. I turn — a bank of clouds, slate grey, rides into the early morning light. Swirls and wisps edge the gaping breach in night's command.

I call Jim by name and tell him I am glad I met him. The light grows ever wider as we walk away.

Jurists Break Their Silence

By TIM LAMBERT

Since we are judges who have to enforce the law, who stand for justice, we felt it our duty not to be silent, but to make public our legal doubts over nuclear armaments, and our human anxieties and fears. We do believe that we owe it to our office not to keep silent any more.

— Ulf Panzer

Criminal court judge, Hamburg, West Germany, November 1984

It started in autumn of 1981, when a group of like-minded judges and prosecutors placed an ad in a local Berlin newspaper. They stated that the Pershing II and cruise nuclear missiles, and nuclear armaments in general, were both immoral and illegal (unconstitutional and not in accordance with the binding rules of international law). Other judges and prosecutors all over West Germany responded by placing similar ads in local papers.

A Munich judge decided to unite all the signers into a loose-knit group, "Judges and Prosecutors for Peace." In December 1982, 500 of them signed an ad which they placed in a nationwide newspaper. It declared that the nuclear weapons the United States was planning to deploy in their country were meant for an offensive nuclear first strike; and

brought closer the possibility of a nuclear war. They demanded talks to stop all developing, testing and stationing of nuclear weapons, and a ban on Pershing II and cruise missiles on German soil.

It was the first time in German history that judges and prosecutors together publicly opposed a government policy.

In Beethoven Hall, in Bonn, they held a peace forum in June 1983. A resolution was passed to say No to new nuclear weapons, and was sent to every member of the German parliament. After the meeting they marched through the capital with scrolls and banners, singing peace songs. They stopped in a market place and read a proclamation to a crowd of astonished on-lookers, who were unable to reckon this kind of demonstration with its class of participants. Many from the group then took part in a nonviolent blockade of the Mutlangen military base, where the United States planned to place some of the new weapons.

One particularly poignant moment in the short history of Judges and Prosecutors for Peace occurred in 1984 when, together, they staged *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*, by Fr. Daniel Berrigan, S.J. The play was written from tran-

(Continued on page 5)

A Prayer for October 3rd

(Continued from page 1)

tend for that kind of rejoicing to be right for us? I ask because there is no disgrace in this jail, or in any of the others I have passed through. "Disgrace" seems to be too old and big and serious a word for anything that could happen today. I am only humored and smiled at and passed by.

But will the rewards and punishments set down in Leviticus be passed by? Both of them, the good and the bad consequences, seem to be beyond our imagination. Was it You Who sent those words to Moses? Is it You Who will "remember the land?" (Lev. 26:42) The Susquehanna and the Delaware and the Hudson, the Northern Appalachians, the Finger Lakes, the Maine Woods, the New England Coast, and what beauty there is that remains in New Jersey — all of these are spread out downwind of Three Mile Island. Are we allowed to put them all at risk for power from one reactor, even after the accident at the other reactor? Do You smile upon that calculation?

The land belongs to You. We are but aliens and Your tenants. (Lev. 25:23) Help me to understand this, and not to feel so completely at home on this planet. All my life I have "lived in safety." Or so I thought. Even now — after I have looked upon the towers — I do not feel afraid from day to day. Would it help if I did?

Soon I must go to court and talk to a judge, a mortal like me. For earthly courts and mortal judges, You give me lots of angry words. Or are they only my words? I hear that You also have a court (Psalm 84:2), but I don't know how to understand that. Our law, the law of New Jersey, holds us strictly to account: "A person who knowingly or recklessly fails to take reasonable measures to prevent or mitigate widespread injury or damage commits a crime . . . if he or she did or assented to the act causing or threatening the injury or damage." (N.J.S. 2C:17-2) Is Your law more difficult to obey than that?

You promise to break the pride of our power. (Lev. 26:19) But where did the power come from? Was it always there, or did You put it there for us to discover? Didn't You know that we would find it? Can only planet-splitting pride suffice to test such tiny souls? With our carelessness and blindness and greed, we let thousands of our children die every day. Yet still You wait to see what we will do? Have we not proved beyond any doubt to be hopeless failures? Is there more disaster, is there disaster after disaster, still left to unfold in this corner of creation, before You bring it all to an end? Must we die before the land can have its Sabbath? (Lev. 26:34-35)

I know that You will not answer these questions for me, a frail and fallible and unworthy creature. You give me only a suspicion that there is a chance things may not be . . . completely lost. So, for that suspicion, if it is from You, and for that chance, if it exists, I set my face against the towers, and put my message, which I hope is Your message, on their wall: Keep Three Mile Island Shut Down.

If it is only pride that makes me so bold, then I am ready for that pride to be broken, as You promise. If, on the other hand, it is not pride, but obedience to You, then I ask that You give others some of the urgency You have given me. These are too many questions for one person to ask, too many things "too wonderful" for me to learn.

Jurists Break Their Silence

(Continued from page 4)

scripts of the trial of peace activists, including Fr. Berrigan, who removed files from a Maryland draft board, and destroyed them with napalm, "to burn paper instead of children." They were convicted and sentenced to several years in prison.

An advertisement for the production included the statement:

We judges and state attorneys perform this play because it is a trial against pacifism. It affects us not only as members of the peace movement, but in our office as judges and state attorneys. After the performance, we will have a discussion, to ask if we could act differently from the judge and the state attorney in Daniel Berrigan's play, or if the structure of our legal system and the statute law forces us to do the same.

In practice, judges who are part of the group have tended to convict defendants in peace actions, but release them without punishment. They are empowered to declare them not-guilty as a matter of conscience, but this usually mandates an appeal to another court, which the defendants have to pay for, and which would likely punish their deed.

Ulf Panzer, a district court judge in Hamburg, who is an active member of Judges and Prosecutors for Peace, has yet to have a peace activist appear before him, but if one did, he has vowed to refuse to open the trial, saying that a trial can only be opened if a law is violated, and, in such a case, he cannot see any law violated. He states:

If you protest or resist nuclear arms, you are on the right side of the law. So the term "civil disobedience" just isn't appropriate. You are obeying the law by resisting nuclear arms.

After members of the Silo Pruning Hooks action in the United States received stiff sentences, ranging up to eighteen years in prison for their acts of

disarmament in Missouri, Judge Panzer and 130 other judges in Germany wrote to Brook Bartlett, the judge who passed sentence in their case, expressing their shock and disappointment at his conduct. In their letter they noted that in a similar disarmament action in Germany, which included one of the same participants as the one in the U.S., Fr. Carl Kabat, O.M.I., the defendants received small fines, and that imprisonment was never considered.

Their work continues in West Germany with additional conferences, meetings, legal assistance to others in the peace movement, and continued resistance to preparations for war. In the words of Judge Panzer:

We strongly oppose the silent preparations for war which are now beginning to take place in our country. That means new laws to build atomic shelters in every new house and every new building. New laws to provide for workers, cars, trucks, other means of transportation and support for soldiers and the military machine in times of crisis or even war. New air raid regulations that prohibit people from leaving their towns and cities or even their homes to prevent a mass flight also. All this means to prepare the population for a war. And we jurists, we judges and prosecutors and administration clerks are the instruments to legalize all these preparations. We want to say NO! We have been a docile instrument, and fifty years ago were used by the Nazis for their atrocities. Now we want to make clear that we cannot be used once more for the atrocities of nuclear war.

NUCLEAR TEST BAN

Pax Christi is asking all dioceses in the United States to help gather petitions during Lent 1987 for a nuclear test ban. Contact: Pax Christi, 348 East 10th Street, Erie, PA 16502, (814) 453-4955.



The Story of Jonah

Fritz Eichenberg

We understand Jonah in contemporary terms. He knows that men are evil; he knows they deserve punishment; he also knows that God is capable of inflicting it. Nineveh has done much harm to Israel; Jonah, the Jew, might have wished to serve as an emissary of vengeance and retribution. But, paradoxically, Jonah, the Jew, ultimately saves Nineveh, just as our generation may be called upon to save a world filled with guilt. There are those of us who feel that only by remembering what it has done to the Jewish people can the world be spared from bringing the catastrophe upon itself!

Jonah thus emerges as an unparalleled humanist and pacifist. Beaten by life, humbled by God, this anti-hero, though he chooses despair for himself and others, thinks of others before he thinks of himself. He opts for life, however filled with anguish, in order to prevent others from dying.

**Elie Wiesel
Five Biblical Portraits**

No Holy War – The Chaplain's Role

(Continued from page 4)

washed," he said, "not by force or torture but by my Church's silence and whole-hearted cooperation in thousands of little ways with the country's war machine . . . The operational moral atmosphere in the Church, in its relation to mass bombing of enemy civilians, was totally indifferent, silent and corrupt at best – at worst it was religiously supportive of the activities by blessing those who did them."

Here lies the problem and I know of no easy answer to it. How does one raise the legitimate moral questions that have to be faced in the military world and survive to provide any pastoral care at all? No one could justify an attitude of unconditional obedience, though Bishop Tickle, a manifestly concerned and pastoral man, appeared to do so in 1973 when he replied to a question related to Northern Ireland: "No, no, if every soldier questioned his orders where would we get to?" Where indeed. Yet the British Manual of Military Law advises servicemen that they might have to make a choice. They "cannot escape liability if, in obedience to a command, they commit acts which . . . violate the unchallenged rules of warfare . . ."

Christian members of the armed forces have a place in the community of the Church which is, in all official documents, a respected and honorable one. But not only can they not offer unconditional obedience, they have to face many other difficult issues as well. What does a chaplain say to a young man or woman about to set off on a naval cruise which is intended to promote the export of weapons to the Third World? Or what did he say to those who asked if every nonviolent way of settling the Falklands dispute had been exhausted before the British task force went into action? What is a chaplain to say to someone in Northern Ireland trained in psychological warfare and black propaganda? What is he to say to the crew of a Polaris submarine – that they can go through all the motions but must never actually fire those instruments of mass murder? What is he to say of military exercises which clearly assume a first use by NATO of nuclear weapons? Perhaps these questions do not often get asked. Were there no questions from British servicemen about the morality and the legality of the American air raid, from bases in our country, on Libya earlier this year?

Not long ago I got into correspondence with a chaplain about some of these issues, as a result of a letter which he had written to a newspaper. The correspondence did not last very long. If I had any further questions, he replied, I should send them to the Ministry of Defense and, meanwhile, would I look on the correspondence as a private and confidential exchange. I sympathise genuinely with that correspondent. He is in a difficult position, if he does not have the same liberty as other Christians to discuss serious moral issues openly.

Not everyone see this as a problem. In 1983, a Polaris captain wrote to *The Times* to assure us all that "our chaplains' role is totally non-political." But I came to realise long ago that there is no such thing as a non-political role. Those who say they are non-political do not actually have to do anything, and are the most effective political supporters of the *status quo*.

It is, of course, always easier to ask questions than to provide answers.

One step towards an answer might be for the Church, as a whole, to take a more detached approach to national problems. The 1971 Synod of Bishops said, in ringing terms, that the Gospel has a power to set us free "not just from sin but from what sin has done to our society." That includes an over-confidence in the ability

of military power to provide peace. We have yet to learn the lesson of Psalm 33: "The warhorse is a vain hope for victory: by its great strength it cannot save."

It is fashionable amongst liberal Catholics to point the finger at South Africa, the Soviet Union, and the *contras* in Nicaragua, and to celebrate the victories of nonviolence in the Philippines. It is not nearly so obvious that we have also to point the same finger at our own society

Crimes Closer to Home

By KATHARINE TEMPLE

In a parish Bible study on Amos, right at the part where the nations are chastized for plundering other people's lands and for the treatment of exiles, someone, actually a rather conservative soul, broke in to comment, "That sounds like American foreign policy." There was a bit of a pause until the priest asked, "Why do you pick on the USA and ignore the USSR?" Another pause, and then, "Well, it does sound more like American policy than we'd care to admit. And, anyway, my guess is that the Bible is speaking to us, to

and even at the workings of our own Church. If the Church, as a whole, maintained a more critical independence in relation to the British social structure, it might be easier and more just to ask the military chaplains to do the same.

But, even in that area, there are steps which could be taken. It might be helpful, in maintaining a critical independence, if full-time chaplains did not have official military status and salaries but

ghanistan (1979). We in the United States try to achieve the same ends through subtler and more refined techniques: free trade, or repressive economic measures, to give some examples. He [Sidney Lens, "Why Do We Have an Arms Race?", CW, March-April 1986] is correct in listing these outrages, but why is this thinking so monolithic? Why can Mr. Lens so easily recognize the crimes of one superpower and not recognize those of another?

The road to clarity has many pitfalls, and global political reporting is a very slippery slope.

On this very question, there is a fine article by George Hunsinger, called "Barth, Barmen and the Confessing Church Today" in *Katallagete*, Summer 1985. Near the end, he says,

It will be immediately objected that I have confined myself to the culpability of the United States and have neglected the crimes of other nations, especially those under communism. In reply, I can only ask how the crimes of others in any way detract from our own. Furthermore, why concentrate on the crimes of others when they are constantly held aloft in this society for all to behold? Finally, why protest against crimes one can do almost nothing about instead of those one might, in concert with others, still do something to rectify?

From a slightly different perspective, Dorothy Day also used to sound a warning about the paper trying to cover all the news from all over the world. Her reason was that we have to write about what we know personally, that the paper has to come out of people's daily lives. She surely did not mean that we are to be provincial (even if "the province" were N.Y.C.), for the experiences and insights of others can enlighten and inform and deepen our common convictions. Rather, I think, she meant that the paper is not an exercise in political science: it is an organ to proclaim the works of mercy over the works of war. The end point is a personal response and the only place to begin is where you are. Although we don't want to be naive or simplistic or to distort reality by being deliberately misleading and one-sided, we must attend to ourselves right here – even if that can give the impression, at times, of being a bit unbalanced. There is some re-balancing to be done.

Questioning the integrity of national myths is seldom hailed as a popular virtue. On the contrary, we live in a land everyone heralds as the specifically chosen hub of the universe. In such a climate, it is hard to peel away the layers of illusion to truths that are not self-evident – like the recognition that this country is not and can never be the guardian of righteousness, but only a nation like other nations. Through reading Amos and the other prophets, we can begin to see something about what it means to be "among the nations," and, when it comes right down to it, the end point for critical analysis remains "the beam in your own eye" and how to remove it.



ST JOHN OF GOD

Ade Bethune

ourselves and our friends, rather than bad-mouthing somebody else, so we can point the finger at a 'them'."

This story always comes back to me when we get letters asking the same thing about *The Catholic Worker*. "Are you soft on communism?" "Are you in the pay of the Soviets?" "Why do you blame the USA for everything and pussyfoot over the USSR and excuse everyone else." For example, two excerpts from notes we've received make a particular point.

Why does your paper fail to recognize the scourge of communism now gradually engulfing the world? Your ideology of nonviolence appears very selective in the face of your silence on the horrors of the Gulag Archipelago, Cambodia's killing fields, Vietnam's boat people, . . . Russia's invasion of Afghanistan, a clone of what she has done in Eastern European countries since the last war . . . In this regard your lack of fairness and balance in reporting social conditions is equalled only by the secular media and too many liberal Catholic publications.

The Soviets use naked, brutal force to achieve their ends as in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Af-

were funded, instead, like other priests, by their congregations, as civilians. It might be helpful if periods of chaplaincy service were limited. I know that, after eight years as a university chaplain, I had all but lost the power of detached Christian reflection about the academic and student world. Perhaps it would help the understanding of both groups if military chaplains had regular dialogue with movements like the United Nations Association, the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, Christian and Ex-Services CND and Pax Christi. We all face an increasingly dangerous world in which no amount of deterrence can deter accidents or miscalculations, and in which we could radically improve the lives of the poor if only we could start to turn swords into ploughshares.

Notes in Brief

THE MILITARY, AND DRAFT REGISTRATION

Each year over 500,000 people enlist in the U.S. Military, and every male is legally required to register for the military draft within thirty days of his 18th birthday. In order to give young people adequate information on which to base their decisions regarding the military, and to assist those who choose to resist registration for the draft, a number of organizations have prepared resources.

The Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO), 2208 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146, has extensive listings for draft counselor referrals, publishes two newsletters, CCCO News Notes (covering issues of war, peace and conscience) and *The Objector* (a journal for draft counselors); and various pamphlets. Their *Handbook for Conscientious Objectors* is an excellent guide for persons struggling with the morality of the draft.

The War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012, has a high school organizing packet, giving strategies for increasing student awareness of draft registration.

The National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO), Suite 600, 800 18th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006, publishes a newsletter, *The Reporter for Conscience Sake*, covering draft issues, particularly draft-related legislation being considered in Congress.

Other organizations with resources on military conscriptions are: the American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, and the Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD), 201 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002.

RESIST NUCLEAR TESTING

The Nevada Desert Experience continues to help focus resistance to continued nuclear testing, at the site where all U.S. tests are conducted. Growing out of a Franciscan commitment to raise public awareness about the Nevada Test Site, the group is pressing for a test ban through on-going education, prayer and nonviolent direct action. Upcoming events include:

- Day of Reflection in December with Richard Rohr, O.F.M. in the San Francisco Bay area, on resistance and contemplation in the nuclear age.

- Nonviolence Conference in January, also in the San Francisco area, with George Lakey as the keynote speaker.

- Lenten Desert Experience VI, March 4-April 19, to observe the season of Lent at the test site in prayer, discussion and action.

- August Desert Witness III to commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to protest further nuclear weapons testing.

For information, contact: Nevada Desert Experience, P.O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127, (702) 646-4814.

Her Name Was Mercy & Known to Many

(Continued from page 1)

held a fascination for Marj, herself a health worker, who saw Mercy as a healer to emulate and a model for the life of the Christian committed to the care of the sick. Mercy's hands were not delicate or genteel, rather, they looked as if they were present at the Creation, assisting in the making of the world. Looking at the photos in a book written about her work in Korea one sees: Mercy holding the stethoscope to the lungs of a tuberculosis patient; Mercy carrying a little Lazarus dying of malnourishment, now brought back to life through the work of those same hands. This last sentence would probably have displeased her, for she would not want it thought that her hands were anything other than God's instruments.

She spoke very sparingly of her years in Bolivia and Korea. It was a rather laborious task to get her to talk about herself, her accomplishments, the awards conferred on her during her lifetime. Because of the damage done by those earlier days, her physical being was never robust for the remainder of her life. But this fact was not as great a concern for her as it was for those who knew and loved her. She took her "wicked" pills, and she tried to be good in not succumbing to her famous sweet tooth as often as she would have liked to. All this was said and done with a sense of humor and a desire not to draw attention to herself. As she grew older, and less certain on her feet, she walked like the wobbly skater who digs into the ice for a bit of leverage, making her way across the floor in slow, deliberate motions, grabbing hold of anything in sight to maintain her balance. We would extend hands to aid the journey, yet she often seemed content to go the distance alone. She laughed at her awkward movements, her frailty, and, on reaching her goals of a couch or chair, she would prfall on to them, letting out a sigh of relief as she did so, much to amusement of all present. We knew this was her comical way of hiding exhaustion. Her well-worn heart had been used until it could be used no more.

These days it is a common thing to ask someone what their "spirituality" is. If there was one word to describe that of Mercy's, it would be Jesus. With the enthusiasm of a child before a surprise, she longed to see Him face to face. She gave simple commentary on the sacred texts. Jesus was the One, and He called us over and over again as He called His twelve. On the book shelf in the living room, one could find books on liberation theology, but Mercy was inclined to read only those writings that were plain, such as the works of Dom Helder of Brazil or Jean Vanier's *I Meet Jesus*, words that spoke to the heart of the matter: love for God, love for neighbor, seventy times seven, justice, yes, but charity, compassion, kindness, mercy. And for those who are promised first place in the kingdom, the poor, Mercy anguished over the discrepancies between the poverty on the Lower East Side and the enormous amounts spent for the contras in Nicaragua, or on weapons for outer space. It made little sense to her; it left her troubled. No, her words about the poor were not spoken in the clinical fashion that we hear the words, "the poor" used today. She knew poverty of body; her lungs had been damaged in Korea by the wrong chemicals used in a smokescreen over the area she had worked in. Because of that incident, and a chronic asthmatic condition, she nearly died years before. The poverty which she saw first hand in Korea and Bolivia, was not merely a phenomenon observed, but a cloak worn, growing heavier with time, her halted breath breathing life into so many over her last years.

Mercy was not a sentimental person but her affection was indeed apparent. In her was the Biblical welcome to stranger, the sisterly embrace. This is not to sug-



Joan Hymn

gest that she did not have her "moments" of impatience, or, in her own assessment of this cross, her periods of being "anx-

ious." Yet they remained moments, never to be seen as the preferred response to life's jagged edges. All roads led back to the chapel, the window there, her desert. From it she could hear and see the suffering of the world, so close to the Blessed Sacrament, in ear shot of her Lord. He knew, for Mercy told Him.

It was this past 14th of September that the thirteenth anniversary of the Sisters' life on the Lower East Side was celebrated. Someone commented that Mercy was only staying alive for the Mass on the feast of the Exultation of the Cross, one last time. We who were present with her in the chapel knew there would be no more anniversaries like this one. She sat with Eileen, Sister Robert Marie (a more recent member of their community), and friends who were gathered from many parts of her New York City life. It was as if she were already beyond our reach. Despite our certainty of her passing, there was a distant look about her that still took us by surprise. This moment was our thanksgiving farewell. The space between our heartbeats, and the silence in the chapel between our hymns and petitions, painfully confirmed what we already knew. Fr. Keehan, the Sisters' former pastor and dear friend, asked Mercy if she had anything to say on this great feast. Her vacant eyes looked back at him, her labored breathing sucked in and out a barely audible whisper: "I just want to know, how much longer, Lord?"

The following day, she was taken by

car to Maryknoll's center in Ossining, NY. As Providence would have it, this great doctor, who labored in Korea, and was so loved by the people of Pusan, died that following Saturday, the 20th of September, the feast of the Korean martyrs on the calendar of the Church.

New York: the city that never sleeps. The pace is like that of an overly stimulated child not knowing how and when to rest. In its frenzy the city shouts its way through the days and on into the nights. It is an ugly giant, sharpening its teeth on the poor and broken; it is a wounded animal longing for the caress of the tenderhearted. It is Jesus on His way to Calvary and Mary whispering "Rabboni" in recognition of her God. Those of goodwill wish to make of it a blessing, a haven of decency for the forgotten ones who have no other land. And, with our great desire to do so, we are consumed so often by impulsive acts like souls without a place to rest. But we cannot rest, we claim, for the city is on fire and its flames give light for other worlds where fire also burns.

The life of Sr. Mercy was a candle offering gentle illumination from a different source in the dark night, disciplined flame that knew The Light had come once into the world and the world had thus been saved.

Dear Sister Mercy, now you are nearer to the stars. Ask the Master of the Universe to hold back the hand of those who would plot war among the heavens. We, who are anxious and pray not to be so, seek your holy intercession.

Boycott Grapes!

A Requiem for a Good Man

By JOHN C. CORT

Sidney Lens died last summer. An amazing man, and a good one. A self-proclaimed atheist, he contributed regularly to religious publications, including *The Catholic Worker* and *The National Catholic Reporter*. A card-carrying Leninist and Trotskyist for much of his life, his ultimate commitment was to nonviolence, in the words of Father Bill Hogan, long associated with him in the Chicago Peace Council.

The man he loved and admired more than any other was A. J. Muste, another former Trotskyist who returned to his Christian faith and used to say things like, "If I can't love Hitler, I can't love at all."

One of the most moving passages in Sidney Lens' autobiography, *Unrepentant Radical* (Beacon Press, 1980), is his tribute to A. J. Muste, which is worth quoting at length because we can all use this medicine:

He was a humanist in the revolutionary sense that he never — absolutely never — deliberately denigrated another person. He believed not only in physical nonviolence, but, more important, in psychological nonviolence — and he practiced it. I was with Muste on occasions when he argued with political adversaries ranging from traditional conservatives to Stalinists, but no one ever walked away from such an "argument" feeling hurt or demeaned. He was always careful not to trample someone else's ego — not only as a matter of principle but because he had so much inner self-confidence (more than anyone I've ever known) that he didn't have to.

Just incidentally, another admirer of A. J. Muste was Peter Maurin, and Muste returned the admiration and used to loan his Labor Temple on 14th Street to the CW for meetings when the Mott Street quarters were inadequate.

Lens was that rare individual, an activist and polemicist who was also a competent and conscientious scholar. Too many of us who lean toward polemical

writing, reveal our laziness and slipshod workmanship by writing and talking in conclusions, judgments and indictments without marshaling the facts to support those conclusions, judgments and indictments.

Take, for example, Lens' piece for the CW of March/April 1986, one of the last articles he wrote before his death, "Why Do We Have an Arms Race?" Whether you agree with his conclusion or not — the contention that the major cause of the arms race is economic imperialism on the part of the U.S. — you must admit that he has marshaled his facts to support it. He stresses the facts that "U.S. exports grew from \$3 billion before [World War II] to \$43 billion in 1970 (and \$220 billion by 1983) and its foreign investments reached similar peaks."

He mentions five forms of U.S. interventionism and illustrates each with examples, such as the fact that "at one time the U.S. was supplying arms to and training military forces in 69 countries."

Sidney Lens was such a good organizer and union official that he could find the time to supplement his union activity with the writing of twenty-three books and visits to over one hundred countries. (As a former union official and writer myself, I can only gasp, "How did he do that?") He also found time to write hundreds of articles and to organize and lead, or share in the leadership of, such valuable organizations as Mobilization for Survival and the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam.

One aspect of his life story I must differ with. On p. 278 of his autobiography, Lens speaks with pride of the fact that "I refused to vote for Truman against Dewey, Stevenson against Eisenhower, Kennedy against Nixon, Johnson against Goldwater, Humphrey against Nixon, Carter against Ford. In every instance I voted for a minority party ticket." (I wonder why he doesn't mention Roosevelt and his various Republican opponents?)

Lens' policy is not as extreme as Dorothy Day's. She was proud of the fact that she never voted at all, despite the further

fact that her first visit to the inside of a jail was a result of her demonstrating before the White House, for women's suffrage.

Much as I love Dorothy and admire Sidney Lens, I think both policies are unreasonable. The argument comes down to this: does the state have any legitimate and necessary role in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and sheltering the shelterless? Even more important, does it have a legitimate and necessary role in guaranteeing jobs, so that we can all feed, clothe and shelter ourselves from the money we receive for doing meaningful, satisfactory work? However, we don't love Dorothy and admire Sidney Lens, and mourn both of them, for every single aspect of their life stories. Phil Berrigan has given us sufficient reason in these words, which he once wrote in a letter to Lens:

I don't think I've ever met a person more passionately committed to life, or so willing to struggle for it. I have always thought of you as one who hungers and thirsts for justice. Indeed, the whole human family has benefited from your hunger and thirst. I speak for resisters everywhere. Peace and gratitude.

To which one can only add, Amen. May he rest in the peace he worked and struggled so hard to win for others.

(John Cort was at the CW during the years 1936-38. His history of Christian socialism will be published by Orbis Books in 1987.)

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Emmanuel Mounier, Personalist

(Continued from page 2)

"the primacy of the Spiritual." What was it that Mounier and his friends hoped to accomplish?

According to its founder, the task of *Esprit* was to make its readers aware of "the established disorder" of what he termed "the bourgeois age." This was an age described in the first articles as characterized by egoism, greed and complacency. Worst of all, "the bourgeois age" made the "spiritual a refuge rather than a vital life force." To paraphrase Mounier, modern society had done away with the idea of sanctity and replaced it with the mad chase after personal glory. It praised easy success rather than silent heroism; it substituted eroticism for love, and a sterile intellectualism for spirit and character. Finally, modern society only



The Sower

Susan MacMurdy

believed in "serial sincerity" and no longer had an "intransigent passion for the truth."

This decadence demanded a total revision of values so that greed, violence, pettiness and mediocrity could be eradicated from the hearts of men and women. This revision was the step towards confronting the enormous educational problem that was at the root of many injustices of "the bourgeois age." A profound revision of all values was to be *Esprit's* work, to, in Mounier's words, "dissociate Christianity from the established disorder so that Christians may restore Christian values to their full stature and recover their revolutionary potential."

Mounier did contemplate a time when political action would be called for. But he demanded of it very high standards and an austere purity. Political action had to be founded on two principles, "the first is that we will act by what we are, as much and more, than by what we will do and say. The second [principle] is that our action is not directed essentially toward success but toward bearing witness."

Esprit immediately caused a tremendous stir in French Catholic circles at the time. A new journal that laid claim to Christian inspiration and used words like revolution, bourgeois and proletarian was shocking to conservatives. They did not like to read that "a complete split exists between the Christian order and the established disorder of French society."

The journal was denounced as leftist; the archbishop of Paris asked to be given a report on the official positions it held. Yet *Esprit* was not condemned by ecclesiastical authorities.

The years from 1933 to 1939 continued to be very difficult ones. Throughout the period, *Esprit* took part in all the messy affairs of French political and social life. Mounier's policy of refusing to oppose or support individual candidates or parties did not mean he was afraid to confront temporal events. The difficult positions he adopted in the fierce debates of the time show very clearly how, for him, the most important thing was "bearing witness."

Esprit editorially came out against the extension of the French military conscription law in 1935, not because of the journal's pacifist leanings, but because it objected to the conservatives backing up

their demands with false interpretations of papal pronouncements. Mounier denounced their linkage of Catholicism with a narrow self-serving patriotism and a willingness to fight wars. In 1936 *Esprit* condemned the Moscow trials. The obvious result was that, very soon after its beginning, *Esprit* incurred the wrath of both the right and the left. This pattern continued during and after the fierce and violent controversies over the Spanish Civil War. *Esprit* documented and criticized all the atrocities, thus continuing to win the enmity of all sides.

Mounier lived a life of voluntary poverty on a small teacher's salary while editing *Esprit*. The monthly journal was plagued by financial problems but managed to appear regularly. In 1935 Mounier married Paulette Leclercq; together

they were to bring three children into the world. When World War II began, Emmanuel Mounier was drafted, and after the defeat of France and demobilization he returned to the town of Lyon where his family, nearly destitute, was then living.

Temporarily Closed

He wrote in his diary in 1941 that "a struggle in which no quarter is given must be waged against the totalitarian spirit." Several issues of his review continued to appear before it was closed down by the Vichy government. He wrote, "I have never felt *Esprit* to be more present, stronger, or more alive than this evening when they think they have killed it. . . . I have no doubt that, on the third day, *Esprit* will rise from the dead in whatever form God wishes it to take."

Mounier joined the Resistance and was arrested in January 1942. During his imprisonment he went on a hunger strike to help some other prisoners. In November he was released and returned to his family and his writing.

Many of Mounier's friends hoped at the end of the war that he would devote himself to the intellectual task of developing the philosophy of personalism. Although he was able to complete some work, his talent went mostly into reviving *Esprit* and plunging back into journalism. At the time many people were being denounced as former collaborators with the Nazis and summarily executed all across Europe. *Esprit* was one of the first post-war publications to condemn the spirit of revenge that followed Liberation. Mounier's editorial courage is credited with saving many lives.

Many lay Christian organizations of workers and intellectuals were forming political parties that wanted to implement the ideas that had been born in the Resistance. One such idea was "humanist socialism," and this became the program of many Christian groups that formed what came to be called the New Catholic Left. A leader of one of these groups, named the Christian Progressive party, went so far as to claim that his inspiration came from *Esprit*; his party's motto was "to be of the Church, in progressivism, with the Communists."

Mounier quickly retorted in the pages

of *Esprit* that, "we do not think that the only revolutionary engagement is in the Communist party, nor that the only revolutionary action is political action." Although he explicitly dissociated himself and *Esprit* from the theory and practice of the Christian Progressives, Mounier did believe that some aspects of the Marxist critique were accurate, and wrote, "Marxism is an acute description of the social and technical status of man." And, moreover, "the Marxist critique of alienation and the life of the worker movement is impregnated by personalism." Mounier's respect for the working class, his sensitivity to their sufferings during the Depression, throughout the war, and now, in a devastated post-war period, made it impossible for him to criticize the Marxists as harshly as anti-Communists wanted him to. Mounier was a Christian who recognized that the poor of the world see in Marxism a great hope. This is why he could say, in his *Personalist Manifesto*, "any arrow shot against Marxist parties wounds, behind them, men who are justly in revolt."

In 1950 the papal encyclical *Humani Generis* was issued defending Catholic doctrine, "from impatient innovators," as one historian writes. This led to the suppression of many of the parties of the New Catholic Left, including the Christian Progressives. Mounier did not see in it any reason to repudiate his views on Communism, and *Esprit* was not reprimanded explicitly by Church authorities.

Mounier's politics and philosophy continually embroiled him in polemics with the Church and caused severe antagonisms with those on the Left. In 1949, at the National Congress of the French Communist Party, its leader, Maurice Thorez, asked that Christians like Emmanuel Mounier, well-known for critique of bourgeois society, join with the Communists. Mounier's response, printed in the following issue of *Esprit*, was a flat refusal. For this he was vehemently attacked as an "anti-Communist Machiavel," a disguised supporter of "American imperialism" and "an idealistic mystic in league with fascists." These charges appeared in *L'Humanite*, the French communist newspaper, and in *Pravda*. In the middle of these battles on different fronts to defend *Esprit* and uphold the personalist principle of dialogue, Mounier

suffered his first heart attack.

The extremely energetic journalist, writer and philosopher who took pride in his hard-working peasant origins, was obliged to reduce his activities. He delegated the direction of *Esprit* to others who have been capable enough to keep it alive to this day. That winter his book *Personalism* was published. He tried to rest as his family and friends desired, but he kept up his large correspondence. In one letter he says his vocation must now be one of meditation, and he spoke of "submitting to events as he would to a spiritual director."

In the winter of 1949-1950 the weather in France was severe; there was much unemployment and homelessness. Many people were living in the streets of the largest cities. In a letter dated March 20, 1950 Mounier sent a small donation of money, which some say he could ill afford, to a worker-priest friend of his living in the slums of Paris. His note said, "I am very concerned that, together, we discover a means of entering into the suffering and struggles of the workers. . . . We have vainly tried to work for truth and justice, but we are not entirely with Christ so long as we do not take our place alongside those outcasts. . . . With *Esprit*, I must in some way, be near you. Do not think I want [to make] a token payment for a clear conscience, but I would like, with my wife, to give at least a little, and to prepare myself for the day on which events will, perhaps, compel us to give everything." Two days later Emmanuel Mounier suffered a fatal heart attack and died at the age of forty-five.

NEW CATHOLIC WORKER HOUSES

Recently we have been pleased to hear from Catholic Worker groups in other parts of the country who are just getting started: In Florida, Tim Shelton, Bea, Dan, Justin and Carrie Moore opened the St. Francis Catholic Worker house on October 4th, at 916 2nd Street, North, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. In mid-September the Las Vegas Catholic Worker, St. John the Baptist House was opened at 1309 Gold Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89106. Michael and Margaret Quigley Garvey and friends have begun a C.W. venture in South Bend, and can be contacted c/o Garveys, St. Joseph Church, 816 Almond Court, South Bend, IN 46617.

Please join us in praying for all these works of mercy and justice, that they may be sustained and strengthened in the Lord.

St. Joseph House

(Continued from page 2)

playing with baby Daniel!). He has since returned to the camps to continue for yet another year. *Te amamos Dennis!* Meg Hyre was also home for a brief portion of the summer. We'll all miss her friendship and spirit of reconciliation which she gave to us (and, hopefully, we'll remember) as she goes back to Oxford University to persevere in her study of philosophy. *Buena suerte, Meg!*

As the more or less official "vocation director" here at St. Joseph House, bequeathed to me by Ernesto at my second coming, I tend to get very panicky when somebody leaves and ask the intercession of St. Joseph to send help. Recently, prayers have been answered in various personages: Marion Spinelli arrived a few months ago, has taken charge of the "paper parties" (newspeak for working on the newspaper with soda and cookies and the radio turned on!), and has brought her charismatic influence positively into our hearts, as she adamantly declares "I'm staying!" among all the rumor and innuendo. Praise the Lord! Also with us are Gerry Moorman, a former Jesuit Volunteer from Holland, just a wonderfully quiet person who does just about everything, and Patrick Kowalski, who couldn't

have arrived at a better time. Thank-you, St. Joseph. Some final good news is that Carl received the word from Christ in the Desert Monastery and will be heading west sometime next month to be with their primitive Benedictine community. We'll miss Carl dearly, especially his growing affinity for black clothing and his devotion to the Little Flower, both of which seem contagious!

In *Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens writes that "these are the best of times, these are the worst of times," and I suppose there is a lot of truth in this as it applies to us here, now. One of my favorite (and over-used and abused) words is "special" — there are so many special people here at the Worker. In fact, everybody is so very special to me, each in his or her own special way. I suppose that's why it's all so difficult, all of the discussions, the dissent, the breaks and the healings, the comings and goings. It's all a part of that long loneliness of which Dorothy Day spoke, and which we all have to live with through our lives. The day before she died, St. Therèse of Lisieux said to her sister Celine, "I have said all... all is consummated... only love counts." May this truth, of the primacy of love in all things, bring us closer to one another, and to God.