

THE CATHOLIC WORKER

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By GEOFFREY GNEUHS

[The following remarks were delivered at Ed's Funeral Mass, October 24, 2008 at The Church of the Nativity, New York City—Eds. Note.]

"Think where man's glory begins and ends and say my glory is I had such a friend," so wrote the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats. Ed was a friend, a very dear friend of some thirty-five years. A few years ago, he discussed, very explicitly, with me at my apartment, over some beer, which goes without saying, "I don't want anyone talking about me at my funeral!" Pace, Ed, we don't always get what we wish for.

Born near Worcester, Massachusetts he lost his mother as a young boy; his father, a shoe designer, remarried. Ed was always devoted to his new mother, "my good Presbyterian mother," he would say. He was likewise devoted to his sister and brothers.

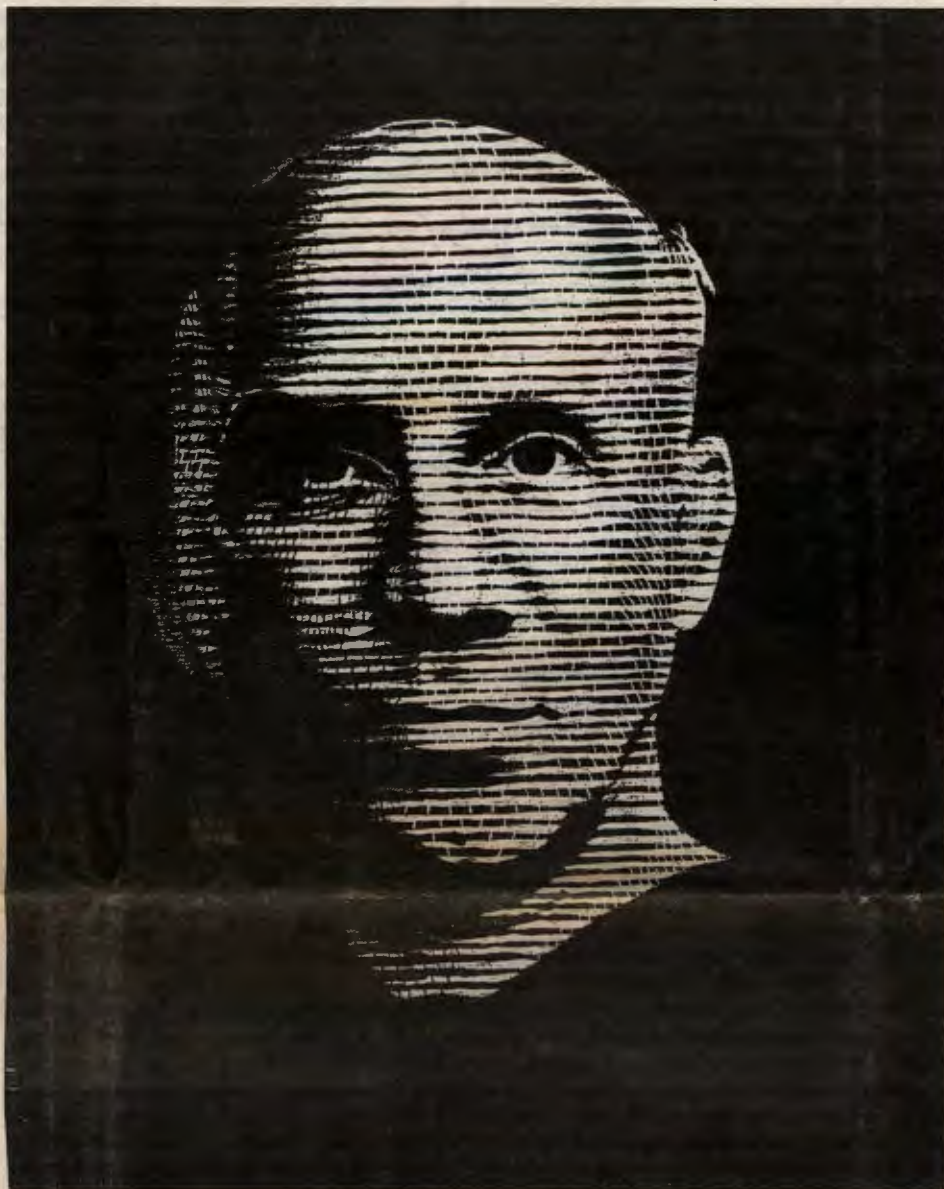
The family moved frequently. In high school in Syracuse, New York, Ed played hockey, football, and baseball. Then, in 1940, he joined the Marines and was sent to Panama. There he contracted tuberculosis, and spent the next five years in bed at home recovering. He took correspondence courses from Indiana University and came to love reading, history, theology, spirituality, but especially literature, and especially Dostoyevsky, and later Solzhenitsyn. He often quipped that only a Dostoyevsky could do justice to the varied life and characters at the Catholic Worker. He worked in business near Philadelphia, and then set off on his spiritual journey—time with the Pittsburgh Oratory, then at Benedict Labre House in Montreal, a stay at the CW Staten Island farm, and finally, came to St. Joseph House in 1961.

He was an indefatigable worker, managing the house, taking care of the money, cooking, assisting in the office work, begging for the vegetables, going to the fish market and inviting speakers. He loved to tell the story when Norman Mailer and Jimmy Breslin, quite inebriated, spoke at a very raucous Friday Night Meeting during the mayoral campaign of 1967. He was a man of duty and responsibility. There was a time, too, when he needed a break. Later on he would open the house early in the morning, clean the pots, and put on the coffee.

He loved the city; yearly we took long walks to Brooklyn looking at the great houses, the architecture, and to what was then known as the Cast-Iron District, now Soho. A stop of course at a pub or two, then dinner, and then, afterward to Milano's on Houston Street, which Ed referred to as Eugene O'Neil's bar, or somewhere else. Ed was a connoisseur of beer. One summer we decided, with Mary Mullins, to brew beer in his apartment. For weeks he researched and studied how to do it, then abruptly changed his mind. He also loved the opera. One evening, I recall tears streaming down his cheeks as we listened to Maria Callas's rendition of "Casta Diva" from Bellini's "Norma." He was keenly aware of the transcendentals: beauty, truth, and goodness.

Some years ago, an acquaintance of mine from college days and his wife came to town for my 50th birthday party. Afterward, they commented how lively and engaging Ed,

(continued on page 7)



Thomas Merton 1915-1968

Kerry Dugan

The Ecological Conscience

By THOMAS MERTON

[The following is excerpted from an article that appeared in the CW, June, 1968—Eds. Note.]

Man is a creature of ambiguity. His salvation and his sanity depend on his ability to harmonize the deep conflicts in his thought, his emotions, his personal mythology. Honesty and authenticity do not depend on complete freedom from contradictions—such freedom is impossible—but on recognizing our self-contradictions and not masking them with bad faith. The conflicts in individuals are not entirely of their own making. On the contrary, many of them are imposed, readymade, by an ambivalent culture. This poses a very special problem, because he who accepts the ambiguities of his culture without protest and without criticism is rewarded with a sense of security and moral justification. A certain kind of unanimity satisfies our emotions, and easily substitutes for truth. We are content to think like the others, and in order to protect our common psychic security, we readily become blind to the contradictions—or even the lies—that we have all decided to accept as "plain truth."

One of the more familiar ambiguities in the American mind operates in our frontier mythology, which has grown in power in proportion as we have ceased to be a frontier

or even a rural people. The pioneer, the frontier culture hero, is a product of the wilderness. But at the same time he is a destroyer of the wilderness. His success as pioneer depends on his ability to fight the wilderness and win. Victory consists in reducing the wilderness to something else, a farm, a village, a road, a canal, a railway, a mine, a factory, a city—and finally an urban nation. A recent study of *Wilderness and the American Mind* by Roderick Nash (Yale University Press) is an important addition to an already significant body of literature about this subject. It traces the evolution of the wilderness idea from the first Puritan settlers via Henry David Thoreau and John Muir to the modern ecologists and preservationists—and to their opponents in big business and politics....

Now, one of the interesting things about this ambivalence toward nature is that it is rooted in our biblical, Judeo-Christian tradition. We might remark at once that it is neither genuinely biblical nor Jewish nor Christian. Roderick Nash is perhaps a little one-sided in his analysis here. But, a certain kind of Christian culture has certainly resulted in a Manichean hostility towards created nature. This, of course, we all know well enough. (The word Manichean has become

(continued on page 4)

Mr. President, Shut it Down!

[This is a statement by the 100 Days to Close Guantánamo and End Torture campaign—Eds. Note.]

Witness Against Torture announces a campaign to close the US detention facilities at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and end torture by the United States within the first 100 days of the new President's administration. With a new administration taking office, we have a historic opportunity to reverse the disastrous policies of the last seven years. Both candidates have signaled a willingness to close Guantánamo. Now that Barack Obama has been elected, we plan to hold him to the pledge he made in June, 2007. "We're going to close Guantánamo.... We're going to lead by example—by not just word but by deed. That's our vision for the future."

As activists who have been working for the closure of this illegal prison and torture chamber, we are glad to hear these positions expressed, but we know that these proclamations are little more than words without continuous, visible and effective pressure. We insist on action. The campaign brings together a coalition of groups and individuals who will take part in demonstrations, educate Congress and the public, and engage in non-violent direct action. We will have a sustained physical presence at the White House and organize activities—from film screenings to lectures and community meetings—in Washington, DC and across the country.

Initiated by Witness Against Torture, the campaign is supported by the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, United for Peace and Justice, the War Resisters League and the School of the Americas Watch. We welcome the participation of other groups. We will begin with a nine-day fast on January 11, 2009, which marks seven years since the opening of the prison at Guantánamo. And then, from January 20th with the inauguration of the next President through April 30th, we will maintain a regular schedule of activities. At the end of the 100 days, we hope to celebrate both the closure of the detention facility at Guantánamo and the adoption of policies and laws that decisively ban torture by the US government.

The prison at Guantánamo has been at the center of the shameful incarceration policies of the Bush administration. Those policies have denied detainees fundamental legal rights and subjected them to systematic torture—at Guantánamo, Abu Ghraib, Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Such practices violate the US Constitution, the Geneva Conventions, and basic human rights. They have been a source of domestic and international outrage, denigrating America's character, weakening its standing in the world, and threatening—not enhancing—its security.

The Bush administration has tenaciously defended its detention regime, twice defying landmark rulings by the Supreme Court and relying on secrecy, cover-ups, propaganda, outright lies, and corrupt legal arguments to conceal or to justify its methods. A Republican Congress acted to further deprive detainees of rights and permit the CIA to "lawfully" torture.

The Campaign calls on all citizens—from jurists to journalists, military personnel to medical professionals, activists to artists—to defend the rule of law and human rights by supporting us in this effort.

Close Guantánamo. End Torture. ✱

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THE CATHOLIC WORKER

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PETER MAURIN FARM

By T. CHRISTOPHER CORNELL

The growing season in 2008 was not very favorable. The weather was wet and variable, with occasional periods of heat that did not mesh well with many plants' growth cycles. Our tomatoes did poorly, as did most people's this year in our valley, and our potatoes died back early at an odd time, resulting in a very lean crop of small potatoes that are fine for roasting but difficult to use at the soup kitchen. I had an attrition rate of over 50% with our onions. Insect damage to the stems allows moisture to infiltrate the necks during wet years, and the onions did not store well. I never got the garlic planted in the fall of 2007, which is a disappointment to the folks at Maryhouse, who are big fans of the garlic, and Cathy Breen will have to wait until next year for leeks. Possibly the crowning insult is the fact that I have no carrots this year. To those who know me, this is unthinkable. Add to this catalog of miscues the typical machinery breakdowns and the growing presence of deer on the property, and now a woodchuck, and you may understand some of the pessimism that creeps into my thinking.

However, with all of these negatives, the single dominant fact of this year was the effect of last year. I had to work off the farm in 2007 and had to defer garden maintenance and house projects. 2008 has been "a rebuilding year," says Joanne Kennedy, borrowing an analogy from sports. After the "breakout" season of 2006, in which I distributed 10,000 lbs. of produce, I was not able to lay a good foundation in 2007, and in spite of some very competent help I never caught up with my work.

This year I have been free to work on the farm, but the previously deferred maintenance and house projects have taken precedence. The septic system malfunctioned and had to be renovated. By working with two local contractors I was able to save the community a few thousand dollars, but this took

time away from the garden. (I learned a lot about septic systems; I suppose it is related to the Works of Mercy, and there is certainly a patron saint of plumbing.) On May Day, the old tractor I use went down, and I could not get it running for over a month. Then, in July, I planted the carrots and abandoned them. I took nine days off to attend the retreat that Dorothy so loved, the "Encounter with Silence" retreat of Father Hugo. This seemed to be a good way to reassert the "primacy of the spiritual," but I also had admitted by then that the farming year was, if not a wash, one of lower expectations.

I have always had a sort of "Chicken Little" personality. I think it is due to my being born in the 1960s, during the Vietnam era, and from my exposure to the less functioning aspects of the US economy and society. Perhaps it is also from the sense of history that is bred into one by reading the classics. Every empire rises and falls. In the 1960s it seemed that American society was coming apart. Growing up in a frugal household, I remember the austerity of the Carter presidency and the sense of threat to our well-being. The Reagan years and the subsequent prosperity always seemed to me to be like a bubble waiting to burst; and so, from the nuclear arms race to Y2K, to Hubbert's peak, to global warming, it has always seemed that "the sky is falling," and the end of the world is near, or at least, the end of the world as we know it.

The Catholic Worker began during the Depression, and it is natural that it should carry with it a solemn, apocalyptic consciousness. In such Easy Essays as "In the Light of History," Peter Maurin traced the trajectory of US capitalism from its origin in the Protestant Reformation, when legalized usury became the fuel that drives the economic engine. It does not occur to many to



Clifford Harper

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 either at Maryhouse—55 East Third St., (212) 777-9617, or St. Joseph House—36 East First St., (212) 254-1640. As far ahead as we can see, those we will hold at First St. will be marked with an *. Feel welcome to call and confirm the schedule. Both houses are between First and Second Avenues (2nd Ave. stop on the F or V train).

Dec. 5100 Days to Close Guantánamo and Stop Torture.

Dec. 12Alice Hendrickson: Report on Turkey.*

Dec. 19Annual Christmas Party—Please Join Us!

Dec. 26No Meeting. Merry Christmas!

Jan. 2No Meeting. Happy New Year!

Jan. 9Karen Gargamelli: Housing Preservation & the Mortgage Crisis.

Jan. 16Reds: A Film on the 20th Century Literary Left.

Jan. 23Bill Griffin: Andrew Bacevich and American Exceptionalism.

Jan. 30The CW at 75: A Panel Discussion Filmed at Fordham University.

Feb. 6Soldiers of Conscience: A film on Recent Conscientious Objectors.

MEETINGS BEGIN AT 7:45 PM

question whether there might be not only a risk, but also an inherent wrong in creating wealth in such a way; greed and corruption seem like necessary evils to be tolerated, so long as a system seems to be working.

Peter proposed his farms as a hedge against what he saw as the beginning of a new Dark Age. The Catholic Worker farm is a fail-safe, a haven for an imagined time of such social upheaval that we might have to go back to earlier ways of living. "There is no unemployment on the land," Peter proclaimed, and certainly there is no end of work. Thus, every year that seems unsuccessful is valuable to me if we can analyze what went wrong and correct it when possible. Pessimism need not be paralyzing. Sober pragmatism is weighed against providential trust.

"Cast your bread upon the waters." My friends at a farm in Connecticut have a bumper crop of carrots which they will let us glean if we help them with the harvesting. Next year's garlic was planted on schedule, even before November came around, and is already mulched for the winter. "The farmer's fruit is a fertile field," says Wendell Berry, meaning that what you create is not the production wrestled from the ground, but a working relationship with the land itself. Like any relationship, it is the chance to start again that counts, rather than one season's produce. We admit that the Catholic Worker may not have the winning formula, but the game plan was never to win. We play for love of the game, not the results. So, like so many others, I am hopeful when I look ahead and say, "Wait 'til next year." In a sense, the New Year has already begun. ✱

BRIDGE BUILDING

Several workers from Maryhouse, Marianne Goldscheider, Janina Steiner and I took the Seastreak ferry to Sandy Hook, New Jersey. What an awesome sight it is to pass under the Verrazano Bridge and see it from below in all its almost overpowering hugeness. Our group from Maryhouse was on its way to visit Fr. Bob Kaeding who offers Mass regularly at Maryhouse and St. Joe's. Father Bob met us at the ferry terminal and drove us down to his own community in Asbury Park. It is called The Center in Asbury Park and it is an AIDS service organization.

We had a convivial lunch in The Center's dining room which has a similar atmosphere of hospitality as Maryhouse, so we all felt right at home. The Center in Asbury Park was founded by Bob fifteen years ago and puts out a newsletter called simply The Center. In a recent issue, he wrote that, "In many ways this annual observance of World AIDS Day [December 1] is a time to 're-fuel,' to dedicate ourselves to continue the Mission and remember that we are responsible for one another in so many ways." In another dimension, The Center was, for me, a more important bridge than the Verrazano.

The Center in Asbury Park relies on volunteers. The address and telephone number are: P.O. Box 832, 806 Third Ave. Asbury Park, New Jersey 07712, (732) 774-3416.

—Bill Griffin



Ade Bethune

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Joanne Kennedy,
Managing Editor

A Visit with Iraqis in Syria

By CATHY BREEN

Amman, Jordan
September 25, 2008

Dear Friends,

With so many families separated by war, I have become a messenger of sorts. In two days, I will travel by bus to Syria. My list of Iraqi families to visit there is growing by the minute, as families here in Jordan are eager to be in touch with their loved ones. In collaboration with Direct Aid Iraq, I have been asked to visit some Iraqis with serious medical problems to see what their needs and wishes are. Fortunately, my visit falls during the three-day celebration of Eid which follows Ramadan. Business as usual shuts down during those days, and it is a time when families visit one another.

I hope to meet as well with a representative from both the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Damascus. According to a recent UNHCR report, Syria expects to submit between 8,000 and 10,000 Iraqi refugees for resettlement to all resettlement countries in 2008. I hope to use the four-hour bus ride to collect my thoughts and questions for those meetings. Know that I take all of you with me and realize how privileged I am to go in your stead.

October 6, 2008

I wasn't prepared for the extent of impoverishment I would see in Syria. Arriving by bus just a few hours after a suicide car bomb took the lives of at least seventeen civilians in Damascus, I learned about the attack from the taxi driver who took me from the bus stop to the neighborhood where I was to meet my translator. Although I understood the Arabic word for "explosion," it was only later that I would get more details.

This visit was somehow different from my other trip to Syria. Maybe it is that I feel more comfortable and at home in the Middle East. But, more likely it was due to the invaluable help and friendship of an Iraqi man, a refugee himself, who acted not only as my guide and translator, but who allowed me to see Syria through his eyes, the eyes of an Iraqi. I will call this friend Mohammed.

Like countless others, Mohammed lives from hand to mouth, not sure where he will come up with rent and food money, not to mention money to renew Syrian visas, or for water, electricity, transportation, cooking gas and necessary phone cards and internet—the latter his means for contact with family and the outside world. Alone in Syria, cut off from family, more than once Mohammed expressed uneasiness about the "walls having ears." Not that he has anything to hide. On the contrary, Mohammed is one of those rare individuals one chances upon only a few times in a lifetime, a person I would describe as "without guile." Apart from loneliness, not being able to work and earn a livelihood is perhaps one of the greatest hardships he faces.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimates there are 1.2 million Iraqi residents in Syria with valid visas. To date, approximately 220,000 Iraqi refugees have been registered by the UNHCR. In addition to numerous visits with Iraqi individuals and families, I was very fortunate to meet on two occasions with representatives from the UNHCR, including someone from their resettlement program. The UNHCR is fortunate to have such capable and caring people on their staff. Both times, I was warmly received and given ample time to hear about their programs as well as present my own concerns on the basis of concrete cases.

I had many questions. What about families or individuals facing imminent return to Iraq because their money has run out? What about families or individuals with dire medical and psychological needs, where suicide has been attempted, for example? How are resettlement cases selected, given the enormous number of refugees in Syria? What about Iraqis who have been in Syria for some

years now and feel they are being overlooked and forgotten? They see Iraqis more recently arrived, often with fabricated stories and false documents, being moved on and resettled. Is the increasing destitution of Iraqis in Syria before 2006 being factored into the criteria for selecting cases? Is not being able—ever—to return to Iraq a contributing factor? Does having family in other countries act to someone's advantage with respect to resettlement?

While the UNHCR's labors in both Jordan and Syria over the last two years cannot be minimized and are praiseworthy to say the least, it must be acknowledged that the basic needs of the vast number of Iraqi refugees in both countries remain unmet. In both Jordan and Syria it has been left to the UNHCR to get resettlement programs up and running—not to mention the overwhelming task of just registering Iraqis who come to them seeking protection and assistance. The UNHCR remains resolute on its position that it is not safe to return to Iraq.

A critical question for Voices for Creative Nonviolence is how Iraqis can obtain cash assistance to cover their basic needs. How can the exorbitant amounts of US funding going to military spending be diverted to refugee assistance? Even if adequate monies could be diverted, there would first be the issue of identifying people in need, and second, the task of finding adequate delivery mechanisms to distribute the money. Both tasks are equally daunting in the face of the staggering number of refugees.

Within the next seven-month period, the UNHCR in Syria hopes to submit 11,000 cases for resettlement to other countries. The goal for Jordan will be 6,000 for the same time frame. As in Jordan, the selection process in Syria is very labor intensive and time consuming for the UNHCR staff. Each case is reviewed and multiple interviews with the candidates are carried out. The cases are selected on the basis of vulnerability, after which resettlement countries willing to take Iraqis must be found. Whether or not a refugee has family living in one of the resettlement countries enters into the equation only after they have been selected for resettlement. This might sound confusing, but it is vital to understand this point. Perhaps a concrete situation can best illustrate this dilemma.

Upon my arrival in Damascus, I telephoned an Iraqi family in Aleppo, in the north of Syria, to put a question to them. I was to meet with someone from the UNHCR before I would have the opportunity to meet the family, and thought that maybe I could speak of their situation with the representative. This couple, together with their two small children and the husband's sister, were able to escape the death threats and violence of their country. Denied entrance to Jordan, they made their way to Syria in December of 2006. The wife has brothers in the United States, and the husband has a brother in Canada. It is through the wife's 75 year-old father in Amman, waiting to join his sons in the US that I came to learn of this family. Wanting to know what the thoughts and wishes of the family were, I asked the wife over the telephone, "Do you want to go to Canada or to the US?" The mother's voice broke as she answered, "We will go anywhere we can be safe." A telling response, as one's wishes no longer factor in.

A few days later, I was able to travel to Aleppo, a five-hour trip, and meet the family. I learned that the family had to flee because of the father's work with a USAID/Iraq company in Baghdad. He was told that he would be killed if he didn't cease his work with USAID. One fateful day, as Iraqi soldiers were arresting people on the street outside their home, the family burned all documents that would implicate the father's association with Americans. The mother spoke of her terror and how she miscarried when she was unable to locate her husband one day. I was struck by



Nativity of the Lord

Lavrans Nielson

the flat affect of their older daughter, who is eight years old. I learned that her school was bombed while she was in class. As an "intact" family, meaning they do not fall into the same category as, let's say, a widow with children or a single woman for example, this family would factor in low on the totem pole for resettlement. This is despite the fact that they have family in both the US and Canada desperate to receive them and grant them safe harbor. If you do the math, over two million refugees in Iraq's surrounding countries and 17,000 resettlement slots in the upcoming months, it will cause your hearts to sink. It is, at best, a dismal forecast.

October 11, 2008

The countries may be different, but the stories are the same. Part of the family lives in Jordan and another part in Syria. Yet, another part is in Australia waiting and longing for the family to be reunited with them there. The wife's mother and sister were in Syria for a year, but had to return to Baghdad as their money ran out. I visited this family in Damascus just a year ago.

Since I last saw them, the family of six has moved to an even smaller rented apartment in an even poorer neighborhood of Damascus. One of the images I have of Damascus this time is not the captivating atmosphere and ageless charm of the old city, but of trash. Trash in the streets and trash in the halls. It is not the trash we are familiar with in the States, styrofoam containers and beer bottles, but "trash of necessity," if there is such a thing.

The family welcomed me warmly. I had brought a little suitcase from the father's sisters and elderly mother in Amman. The children approached me timidly at first, giving me pictures they had drawn for me. I hope to pass them on to their grandmother here in Amman. The young father of four had sold the only possession of worth the family had to make ends meet—a laptop computer. I remembered seeing it on a table last year.

This year there is no table, and I wonder if they have sold the heater, too. The father says they will have to return to Iraq. The wife is adamantly opposed, remembering how they fled for their lives, spending one week at the Jordanian border on the side of the road with their small children. Hoping against hope to join family in Amman, entry was denied them and they went to Syria.

"I went to the UNHCR to tell them we are out of money and that I was going to go back," the father told me through a translator. Regrettably, he wasn't allowed inside the UNHCR complex to tell them of his situation. He was turned back by the guards at the entrance.

They told me accounts of Iraqis who have recently arrived who are already resettled in other countries. The father showed me a falsified document of a threat letter from Al Qaeda. Someone had given him the letter to use at the UNHCR to bolster their case, but he said he didn't want to use false pretenses and did not use the letter. They have been told by the UNHCR staff that they must wait for a telephone call. There is often no signal available for his cell phone inside the apartment, and this makes him anxious if indeed the UNHCR tries to contact them.

As my four-month stay in the Middle East draws to a close, I can't help but wonder what message I could possibly bring back with me to the United States. The grim reality of a global recession is foremost in the news and on everyone's mind. The repercussions of the economic meltdown caused by our credit-based/consumer-driven culture in the US are already being felt at home and the world over.

But, there is another picture I would like to leave you with. It is one of the pictures drawn by the eight year-old Iraqi boy in Damascus. It shows colorful houses, trees, green grass, clouds and the sun. Things we all desire and need. Things we dream about the world over. It is not about blame that I write today. It is about choice. And dreams. ✚



Dogwood

June Hildebrand

ECOLOGY & THE POOR

Cataumet, MA

Dear Friends,

The month of December is the "season of light" in several religious traditions and it's an appropriate time to think about energy issues. December is the month that includes the Hanukkah season and much of the Advent season. The Winter Solstice is celebrated in Japan and in other nations.

Energy is like food. It's essential for human survival. Some people waste enormous quantities of energy. Others struggle to pay for the basics of heat, light and transportation. The poorest of the poor, who are often homeless or in institutions, ask for a clean blanket and a warm meal at the end of the day.

In recent months, much has been said about global warming, the plight of the polar bears, and the future of glaciers. These are important concerns that deserve significant attention. However, there is a need to expand the energy conversation. How do we provide all people, in all places, with adequate supplies of energy?

How do we develop sources of energy that are safe, affordable, and sustainable? This is what energy justice requires. Clearly, some sources of energy are affordable, given present conditions, but they may not be safe or sustainable. Clean energy technology has promise, but is it affordable and will it benefit the poor this winter? If a family needs to heat its apartment today, can we tell the family to wait until low-cost solar panels are available? When will the benefits of "green technology" trickle down to the needy?

Some people enjoy great wealth and some of the wealthy celebrate the environment. However, there are millions of workers at the bottom of the pyramid who do the dirty and difficult work that makes today's prosperity possible. You'll find these workers cleaning hospitals and factories, working at construction sites and in agriculture, and working in other places that can be especially dangerous.

In December, think about energy issues and think, again, about the Light that has come into the world. We need to appreciate the natural order. Global warming and recent hurricanes may, indeed, provide us with a helpful wake-up call. Christians look to Christmas for warmth and enlightenment. As we enter the celebration, may we better appreciate God's love and may we better understand the need for human kindness.

Evergreen,
Robert Francis Murphy

Thomas Merton—40 Years On

By ANNA BROWN

In "Thomas Merton: A Friend Remembered," Jim Forest, a founder of the Catholic Peace Fellowship, recounts of Thomas Merton: "He was a man with an immense capacity for wonder and delight. He could not accept murder as a virtue, no matter how official or patriotic or revolutionary the excuse. He had no patience for the carefully contrived commercial noises—or ideological noises—of culture or counterculture, but an enormous patience for the sound of prayer, wind and rain." I read Jim Forest's article this past summer as I was preparing for my fall term classes at Saint Peter's College. As soon as I read his recollection of Thomas Merton, I knew that Thomas Merton's was a voice my students needed to hear, and that I needed to hear again as well. I then asked my students to read Jim Forest's essay, Thomas Merton's essay "Blessed Are the Meek: the Roots of Christian Nonviolence," and Thomas Merton's *Raids on the Unspeakable*, for our class discussions which are scheduled to coincide with the fortieth anniversary of Thomas Merton's death on December 10, 2008.

In my Introduction to Social Justice class, I often read aloud the poems of Mary Oliver. A poet of grace, light and clarity, she is revered for her nature poems. Here of late, however, the darkness of our political world is seeping into the lines of her poems. In her poem, "Of the Empire," for example, she writes of North America, "We will be known as a culture that feared death and adored power, that tried to vanquish insecurity for the few and cared little for the penury of the many... And they will say that this structure was held together politically, which it was, and they will say that our politics was no more than an apparatus to accommodate the feelings of the heart, and that the heart in those days was small and hard and full of meanness." Thomas Merton, in "Blessed Are the Meek," writes, like Mary Oliver, of the "facts of the world" and of hearts that have been constricted, mostly, by fear.

When he examines the "roots of Christian nonviolence" in "Blessed Are the Meek," he well appreciates the "basic unity of [human] kind" which must be foundational to any practice of nonviolence, Christian or otherwise. And yet he asks, specifically of Christians, "If the Gospel is preached to the poor; if the Christian message is essentially a message of hope and redemption for the poor, the oppressed, the underprivileged and those who have no power humanly speaking, how are we to reconcile ourselves to the fact that Christians belong for the most part to the rich and powerful nations of the earth?" Professor Michael Nagler, founder of Peace and Justice Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, reports that we are bombarded by as many as three to four thousand commercial messages on a daily basis. With the gospel of consumerism being propagated to the degree that Prof. Nagler reports, it is not surprising to find that my students often view profit, privilege and exclusion to be in accord with the natural and right order of things. In order to deconstruct the logic of consumerism and its rather pernicious incarnation, each of my Social Justice classes begins with a ten minute period of silent meditation. My hope and prayer is that each student will come to "see," for example, the mighty roar of a single raindrop. Unadorned and ordinary, this raindrop will show immediately the unity of all if only we are able to look.

I teach my class through an admixture of silent meditation, readings, and engagement in the community, because spiritual masters, such as Thomas Merton (through his writings), Daniel Berrigan, S.J., Robert Kennedy, S.J., Dorothy Day (through her writings) and many Catholic Worker friends have taught me the value of what Thomas Merton calls, "the inseparability of Christian hope and humility." Whether it be the "patience to listen to the wind and rain" (Thomas Merton);

engaging in acts of nonviolent civil disobedience (Daniel Berrigan); learning from others through the practice of Zen Buddhism (Robert Kennedy); or, serving the least among us (Dorothy Day/Catholic Worker), all of these teachings embody what Thomas Merton says, in "Blessed Are the Meek," is a Christian way of knowing the world: "there are radically sound possibilities in everyone, and [Christians] believe that love and grace always have the power to bring out those possibilities at the most unexpected moments."

In "To Each His Darkness: Notes on a Novel of Julien Green," found in *Raids on the Unspeakable*, Thomas Merton writes once again of the "unexpected moment." In this piece of literary criticism, he emphasizes the unexpected moment of mercy. For him, the ability to live a life of gratitude, praise, patience and nonviolence is the domain of those who have freed themselves from the absolutist grip of the ego and of the state. It is a way of life that defies the logic of idolatry: that is, to put oneself and one's nation above all others. Thomas Merton writes of this liberated way of being as that of one who finds his/her home in the "inconsistent world of mercy."

For Thomas Merton, the "world can only be consistent without God." Speaking to the human tendency to project upon the world his/her desire for control, Thomas Merton reminds us that God's "freedom will always threaten it [the world of our projections] with inconsistency, with unexpected gifts." Mercy is one example of an unexpected gift. Thomas Merton, writing of the "tragic seriousness" of North American society, claims we have "made up such a world" because we have chosen to give in to, rather than to work through, "lusts, greeds, angers and hatreds." The flip side of this tendency, also present in society, is the refusal to take anything seri-

ously and is characterized by a facile optimism or saccharine piety. The unexpected gift of mercy is one that may break through the consistent and rigid patterns of our fixations. Daniel Berrigan, friend and contemporary of Thomas Merton, writes, in his *Lights On in the House of the Dead*, that, "we must break through the net... the stupefying effect of habit, inheritance and routine, to be the occasion of a fresh start, because one has made it for himself."

At the end of "To Each His Darkness," Thomas Merton writes in a way that had me riveted. It is worth citing him as fully as possible here: "Law is consistent. Grace is inconsistent." The Cross is a sign of contradiction—destroying the seriousness of law, of the Empire, of the armies, of the blood sacrifice, and of obsession. But the magicians keep turning the Cross to their own purposes. Yes, it is for them too a sign of contradiction: the awful blasphemy of the religious magician who makes the Cross contradict mercy! This of course is the ultimate temptation of Christianity! To say that Christ has locked all doors, has given one answer, has settled everything and departed, leaving all life enclosed in the frightful consistency of a system outside of which there is *seriousness and damnation*, inside of which is the intolerable flippancy of the saved—while nowhere is there any place left for the mystery of the freedom of Divine Mercy which alone is truly serious, and worthy of being taken seriously." Though Thomas Merton is now forty years dead, he has never been more alive to me than he is at this moment. I often think that he is right there with us in my Social Justice class—radiant, joyful, and delighting in each of us while, at the same time, challenging each of us to be the "mystery and mercy of Christ" in our world today. ❖

The Ecological

(continued from page 1)

a cliché of reproof like communist or racist.) But the very ones who use the cliché most may be the ones who are still unknowingly tainted, on a deep level, an unconscious level. For there is a certain popular, superficial and one-sided "Christian worldliness" that is, in its hidden implications, profoundly destructive of nature and of "God's creation" even while it claims to love and extol them....

Much of the stupendous ecological damage that has been done in the last fifty years is completely irreversible. Industry and the military, especially in America, are firmly set on policies which make further damage inevitable. There are plenty of people who are aware of the need for "something to be done," but just consider the enormous struggle that has to be waged, for instance in eastern Kentucky, to keep mining interests from completing the ruin of an area that is already a ghastly monument to callous human greed.... When a choice has to be made, it is almost invariably made in the way that is good for a quick return on somebody's investment—and a permanent disaster for everybody else.

Aldo Leopold, a follower of John Muir and one of the great preservationists, understood that the erosion of American land was only part of a more drastic erosion of American freedom—of which it was a symptom. If "freedom" means purely and simply an uncontrolled power to make money in every possible way, regardless of consequences, then freedom becomes synonymous with ruthless, mindless and absolute exploitation. Such freedom is in fact nothing but the arbitrary tyranny of a wasteful and destructive process, glorified with big words that have lost their meaning....

Aldo Leopold brought into clear focus one of the most important moral discoveries of our time. This can be called the ecological conscience. The ecological conscience is centered in an awareness of man's true place as a dependent member of the biotic community. Man must become fully aware of his dependence on a balance which he is not only free to destroy but which he has already begun to destroy. He must recognize his obli-



Ade Bethune

Movie Review: Grace Is Gone

By FELTON DAVIS

I had high hopes for this movie, that it would bring home to heedless Americans what the war in Iraq is doing to people, and not just be a shameless tear-jerker about a family who loses their mother. It's beyond question that a lot of care and emotional work went into the making of "Grace Is Gone," and it was a project of great potential. If it did not quite fulfill its promise, it's certainly not for lack of good intentions on the part of the cast and fledgling writer/director James Strouse.

John Cusack's character, Stanley Phillips, is supposed to be a combination of awareness and denial, a competent and conscientious father under ordinary circumstances, but unable to meet a tragic challenge of parenthood: informing the children that their mother has died in Iraq.

In most probing psycho-dramas, you never really know what it is that is going to make it real for the audience, that a character has a certain flaw, that the pieces of his personality just don't fit together in the way we expect for a father of two young daughters. It's part of the mystery of cinema that with a momentary expression on a character's face, or just with the sight of the person in silhouette, at night, standing outside a phone booth, suddenly the audience gets it, and in their hearts they too are hesitating to pick up that phone. There must be many parents across the US for whom John Cusack's heartfelt performance is a re-creation of their agony at the loss of a loved one, and their quest to put it into words.

Stanley goes to a support group for spouses of people in the military. He has around

him a circle of friends committed to listening to each other's stories and lending support to each other. Any one of those women (even the goofy ones, lost in small talk every other Wednesday), if they got the crisis call, would say, "I understand completely, Stanley, I know exactly how you feel. I'll be right over. We'll pick your children up at school, and find the right place, and I'll help you tell them."

Stanley, in his misery, cannot avail himself of their help without acknowledging his vulnerability and weakness. After sending the military chaplains on their way, he takes his daughters Heidi and Dawn and goes into about a week of escapism and denial, a crazy road trip as weird as it is long, which you're supposed to think of as a voyage of family discovery. During this trip they encounter Stanley's brother John (unemployed with a capital U), and for all his thoughtlessness and insensitivity, it is John who puts it to Stanley in the crudest terms, telling him what he needs to hear: "If you don't tell the girls, you're going to screw them up."

John is not a likable brother, with his easy expectations of what Stanley must do, and so they have to almost come to blows over it, there's so much frustration building up inside Stanley. John is correct, the girls have to be told sooner, not later, but Stanley just can't take a deep breath and admit that. Alone with his daughters, having rejected help from his brother, his support group, their school, and the chaplains, Stanley becomes desperate and swerves the Chevy Blazer off the road, plunging full speed into a farm field, twisting and turning in a futile attempt to overturn the vehicle and send them all to the emergency room. Oh, what a wild and reckless ride we have in store for all our children in this time of crisis, lest you think that Stanley is someone else and not you and me! Our children, who are the hope and the future and the promise, can only hold onto their seats as we plunge them into blind confusion and disarray, unable as a society to face the truth of what the war has done to us.

Stanley's wife Grace as a character in the present tense is, of course, missing, so we only hear her leftover message on the cell phone: "I can't take your call right now, please leave a message after the tone." I think it would help in making Stanley's mental block more understandable if the audience was shown a flashback of the good-bye between Grace and the children. What kind of promises were made when she left to be deployed to Iraq? What were the children told then, that makes it impossible for them to be told otherwise now?

The road trip represents Stanley's idea of quality time for the three of them, but how long can it go on before they realize that something is wrong, and begin to put two and two together? Predictably, twelve-year-old Heidi is a little more suspicious than eight-year-old Dawn, and more attentive to the inconsistencies between what their father is telling them and what external clues suggest. Testing everything (including, in one excruciating scene, reaching for a cigarette), Heidi summons her resolve, and puts the question to her father in the car on the way to Florida. If the film has indulged in some very typical wallowing at certain points, it rises far above shallow grief in this exchange of startling significance, suddenly commencing in an unexpected struggle with the truth.

Heidi: Dad... do you ever think that Mom should have stayed home?

Stanley: All the time.

Heidi: Why did she have to go?

Stanley: She was doing her duty, Heidi. You know that.

Heidi: I know, but what exactly does that mean?

Stanley: We've talked about this. We have people all over the world, looking out for our safety. When they discover a threat, they have to act on it. That's the way the world is.

Heidi: On the news they're saying that

Do not depend on the hope or results.
When you are doing the sort of work you have taken on, you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no worth at all, if not perhaps, results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea, you will start more and more to concentrate not on the results, but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself.

—Thomas Merton

Dom Paschal Baumstein, OSB

DRESSED FOR WAR

This fall, Sears began selling its All American Army Brand's First Infantry Division collection, a new clothing line sold under license with the US Army. In marketing this clothing line to men, women and boys (not girls, it appears), the Army is entering new territory in its efforts to desensitize our culture to increasing militarization.

Organized in 1917 and sometimes called the "Fighting First" or the "Big Red One" (referring to the large red number one on its patch), the First Division is typically seen as the oldest division in the US Army, and has fought in several wars, including the current war in Iraq. Because this new clothing line uses the insignia and patches of the First Infantry Division, some in Congress have criticized the Pentagon for allowing people who haven't been in the First Infantry Division to wear its patches—trading on the history of the US Army.

Others see more nefarious designs than simply profiting on a US Army division's reputation and history. While a press release from Sears claims that the profits from this clothing line will be used to support military families, this new effort by the Army is rightly criticized as another attempt to recruit people.

J.E. McNeil, executive director of the Center for Conscience & War (CCW), a Washington, DC-based organization committed to supporting conscientious objectors to war, said, in a statement, "We can pretend that marketing isn't recruiting, but the reality is that recruiting is marketing and marketing is recruiting."

Lest readers protest that too much significance is being attached to a clothing line, a Department of Defense Directive released in December 2007 lists "supporting the recruiting and retention efforts of the Military Departments," and "supporting the civilian recruiting and retention efforts of all [Department of Defense] Components," as objectives of the program that developed this clothing line.

CCW is calling for a boycott of Sears until it stops marketing the Army to children, and is urging people to contact Sears and make their opposition known. The product line was slated to roll out in October, in time for Christmas gift shopping. Why celebrate the Incarnation, the birth of the Prince of Peace, with a gift from the US Army, one of the world's greatest purveyors of death and destruction?

W. Bruce Johnson is the Interim Chief Executive Officer and President of Sears Holdings Corporation, which owns Sears. Contact him at Sears Holdings Corporation, 3333 Beverly Road, Hoffman Estates, IL 60179, (847) 286-2500.

—Matt Vogel

Conscience

gations toward the other members of that vital community. And incidentally, since he tends to destroy nature in his frantic efforts to exterminate other members of his own species, it would not hurt if he had a little more respect for human life too.... The respect for life, the affirmation of all life, is basic to the ecological conscience.

The tragedy which has been revealed in the ecological shambles created by business and war is a tragedy of ambivalence, aggression and fear cloaked in virtuous ideas and justified by pseudo-Christian clichés. Or rather, a tragedy of pseudo-creativity deeply impregnated with hatred, megalomania and the need for domination. This is evident in the drama of the Vietnam war, cloaked as it is in the specious language of freedom and democracy. The psychological root of it is doubtless in the profound dehumanization and alienation of modern Western man, who has gradually come to mistake the artificial value of inert objects and abstractions (goods, money, property) for the power of life itself, and who is willing to place immediate profit above everything else. Money is more important, more alive than life, including the life and happiness of his closest and most intimate companions. This he can always justify by a legalistic ethic or a casuistical formula of some sort, but his formulas themselves betray him and eventually lose even the meaning which has been arbitrarily forced upon them.

Aldo Leopold has defined the ecological conscience. Can such a conscience be formed and become really effective in America today? Is it likely to be? The ecological conscience is also essentially a peace-making conscience. A country that seems to be more and more oriented to permanent hot or cold war-making does not give much promise of developing either one. But perhaps the very character of the war in Vietnam—with crop poisoning, the defoliation of forest trees, the incineration of villages and their inhabitants with napalm—presents enough of a stark and critical example to remind us of this most urgent moral need. Catholic theology ought to take note of the ecological conscience, and do it fast.

From the Book of Notes

By RIC RHETOR

One has to be a bit cautious when writing a column like this in a newspaper that goes out only seven times a year—you know: stale news syndrome. But, things happen so quickly that even were we to go to press more often, we'd still probably never catch up. It's one of the characteristics of the US, the desire to be on top of things, to be ahead of the game, to have lots of information at one's fingertips. And yet, there are many things that remain timeless, like truth, always in season, fresh and full of hope, despite its harbinger-like qualities.

With this in mind, hats off to Darrel Vandeveld, the former lead prosecutor in the Guantánamo case of *United States v. Mohammed Jawad*, a longtime prisoner there. Lt. Colonel Vandeveld, initially a zealous promoter of the US position *vis à vis* those "detained" at Guantánamo, began having strong misgivings about the underage Mohammed Jawad, who, after being picked up, was then placed in prison with adults, without any attempt to, in the words of Darrel Vandeveld, "rehabilitate him." The treatment of Mohammed Jawad is against US military and international law.

This set off a deep, personal conflict. In a letter reviewing his relationship to the case, Mr. Vandeveld stated: "I am a resolute Catholic and take as an article of faith that justice is defined as reparative and restorative, and that Christ's most radical pronouncement—command, if you will—is to love one's enemies." We hope to hear more about this courageous man, married, and the father of four, who lives in Erie, PA. We pray that the example of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter will buoy up Darrel as he joins the growing number of honorable men and women who've had conflicts with the Armed Services for reasons of conscience.

Our own CW has its share of people who were in the military. Although not all of them left for reasons of conscience, all began a journey which eventually led them to a community longing to build a peaceful society, or, in Peter Maurin's words, "a new society within the shell of the old." Many of these men (I don't think we've as yet had any women veterans coming to us, although a few came in out of immediate need from the street) learned lessons that changed their understandings of what service is, that the Works of Mercy are truly opposed to the works of war. One thinks of that beautiful illustration that Rita Corbin did, "The Works of Mercy/The Works of War."

One such seeker was Edgar Forand, with us since the early sixties, who died at the age of ninety-one on October 19th. More about Ed appears in Geoff Gneuh's obituary on page one. Like Darrel Vandeveld, Ed was a faithful Catholic.

The very day after Ed's funeral, little Esther Kennedy Finger was baptized in the chapel of our Lady of Loretto at the Holy Name Centre on Bleeker Street. Msgr. John Ahern (Esther's mother calls him "the good padre"), friend to many CWers who've helped him in his work with the poor of our area, did the honors. Ed Forand often went to daily Mass over at the Holy Name Centre, and it was a moment of great poignancy when Msgr. Ahern reminded us that Esther was beginning what Ed completed the day before, "In Baptism he died with Christ: may he also share His Resurrection...."

Immediately after the Baptism, Ted and some others dashed back over to Maryhouse to get the dining room ready for the party. Janina was on hand to help. The victuals, ah yes, the victuals. How delightful they were: fried chicken, macaroni and cheese—we love the ethnic cuisine of African-America—and



Sally Elliott

the cake was out of this world. Parents Michael and Joanne, brother Jonah, various friends and CW family, scarfed down the unusual late-morning goodies.

It was great to see Pat O'Neil and Siobhan with their two daughters, Shiori and Bronwyn; Joe, Sabra, Adam, Sophia and Brendan; Matt D., Amanda, and Tobias; Matt V. and Tanya; Paul, Silke, Eugene, Bud, and Mary Glackin were present, as was our favorite nurse, Terry. Wonderful to see Lucia there, although her fine husband, John, we missed. And, of course, the inimitable Richard "Whiskers" Harper was on the scene—it's less of a party without Whiskers, you know.

Roger was out in the kitchen doing the dishes when I peeked in, discussing the Friday Night Meeting that Matt Meyer of WRL had done the night before. Evelyn had a good time, it seemed. She couldn't resist a chicken leg (she's a vegetarian, for the most part) and she couldn't get enough of that Baptism cake. As the saying goes (I'm thinking of the chicken-leg vegetarians among us), "There is no party line at the Catholic Worker."

The next day, Sunday, (and down in that same dining room) could be called "pumpkins carving Sunday," with Michael, Ted and Amanda showing us how, not to mention Jonah sharpening up his skills with an interesting architectural design on his pumpkin—sort of a back window thing. He carved between bouts of ball-playing with Tobias, who was later distracted by the arrival of his lovely sixteen-month old contemporary, Grace Langhenry, along with parents Pat and Raissa.

For his part, Whiskers drew pictures with Erin at a table covered with newsprint and felt-tip pens. On that chaotic Sunday, Jane sure was grateful for the dishwashing skills of Roger (again!) and Erin, plus Sander, who does the music at the noon Mass at our parish, and his friend, Christina. Sander's three-and-a-half-year-old son, Coleman, was part of a caper involving the stuffed and musical toy, Elmo, and some other "soft guy" (Jonah's name for them). Jonah and Tobias were also players, which clearly had some political and conspiratorial overtones—something about learning to share and avoiding subterfuge. Jane wouldn't ask Roger about this since he does not believe in conspiracy theories. Joanne is the one with the scoop on this incident, but she's not talking.

We've had some thought-provoking meetings these last several Fridays. Ted introduced us to the work of Ingeborg Bachmann, an Austrian who wrote in the post-WWII period, particularly on themes of war and peace, especially the battlefield of the human spirit. John Mullen invited a former classmate, Michael Halloran, to talk about intimations of the spiritual found in the most secular of movies. Michael, now a diocesan priest, lived as a Carthusian monk for several years, and was the commentator for last year's sleeper hit, "Into Great Silence." That documentary, on life in a Carthusian monastery, brought a great silence to this babbling city of New York, with

long lines at the theater where it was showing, and a great number of patrons—many who, it was reported in some of the arts pages of our local newspapers, had no obvious connection to religious institutions.

Visitors these last few months included a number of former CWers. We were so happy to have Kathy Clarkson and Peggy Scherer as weekend guests at Maryhouse. They were in the city to celebrate the birthday of Pat DeAngelis. All three worked hard with us in the seventies and eighties. A week later, Bill Barrett paid us a surprise visit, getting a chance to catch up on the news with Jane. Bill, now a teacher of photography at Webster University in St. Louis, brought a group of students to New York for a seminar. Bill is an alum of Maryhouse as well. Then there was one of the earliest Maryhouse dwellers, Lee McCuyer, here especially to visit Frank.

It was a delight to have Kathy Kelly with us for too brief a visit. She was telling us some of the latest stories from Iraq's suffering people. She also had a public speaking engagement up at close-by Cooper Union. After returning to Chicago, Kathy sent us a collection of poems about Iraq by David Smith-Ferri, for which she wrote the foreword (*Battlefield Without Borders*, Hayley's, Athol, MA, 2007).

We need to hear the stories that Kathy Kelly and our Cathy Breen bring us. Cathy has continued working in Amman for the last several months with Iraqis who've taken refuge in Jordan. They bring us these voices—voices that the people themselves can't bring. Iraqis aren't given entrance to the US in the vast majority of cases. We keep hoping their voices are joined here with the Iraqi people themselves someday, so that the whole truth of their country's suffering can be known.

The truth is supposed to set us free, in any season, even if the incident surrounding the truth took place a while ago. A good example of speaking truth to power par excellence, was one which Steve Baggerly, of the Norfolk CW, wrote about concerning the fiftieth annual air show at the Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach, Virginia. All sorts of praise was given to the enormous array of military wares; children could go to the show and lay in the grass like snipers, even getting to hold a rifle to make it all real.

Steve goes on to say that the effects of sniper fire, of high-tech weapons systems etc., had no place in these air shows—"public liturgies venerating the gods of metal." But, people like Steve Baggerly tell the truth about them: "Nowhere was their killing vocation acknowledged. Nowhere was the reality of the people under the bombs ever whispered; the deafening explosions, the quaking earth, the fear, the chaos, the smoke and fire, the loss of homes, jobs, utilities and resources, the burning of flesh, the spurt of blood... that every time a bomb-bay door opens or a wing launcher is fired, civilians, innocents and children are as likely as

anything to be blown to shreds. Nowhere were the photos of decapitated or blood-drenched Iraqi and Afghan children."

We remain hopeful despite all that seems to the contrary. Anna Brown had Arm of the Sea, a wonderful theater troupe, out to St. Peter's College a few weeks back. By using hand and body puppets, they told the story of a brave, undocumented worker from Mexico, who organizes his fellow farmworkers despite the owner's brutal attempts to thwart his efforts. After the presentation, there was a delicious rice and beans meal prepared by Sister Anne Montgomery at the King/Kairos Justice and Peace House on campus. Later that same day, Jane went to the college art exhibit, "Speak Truth to Power: Human Rights Defenders Who Are Changing the World." There, for all viewers to see, were the photos of men and women, living and dead, who spoke out at the cost of their liberty, or even their lives.

And, finally, and on a more joyous note, we send our belated congratulations to Willa Bickham and Brendan Walsh, down at Viva House in Baltimore, on Viva House's fortieth anniversary. We were grateful to read of the good outcome after Brendan met a would-be-mugger last summer while out for an early morning jog. We were also delighted to know that our Jesuit friend Fr. George Anderson said his first Mass in their parish, forty years ago. We wish them all the best, and pray that their good work continue for forty, fifty or a hundred more years to come.

CPF NEEDS HELP

The Catholic Peace Fellowship (CPF) is dedicated to supporting Catholic conscientious objectors through education, counseling, and advocacy. To this end, the CPF offers a great many resources for dioceses, schools, parishes, students, soldiers, chaplains and others, including workshops, pamphlets, reading and discussion guides, internet radio broadcasts and lesson plans.

Supporting active duty and reserve members of the military, the CPF is also a busy branch of the GI Rights Hotline, a free, confidential hotline providing information regarding military policies, procedures and regulations, including those on conscientious objection. The CPF also publishes *The Sign of Peace*, a journal exploring issues of war and peace and conscience and Church teaching. It addresses, in CPF's words, "our situation today as followers of Jesus in a country at war." The CPF's annual conference brings people from all over the country together to share ideas, discuss plans and projects and work on ways to better spread the word about Catholic thought on war and peace issues.

All of this, of course, takes money, and the CPF is committed to being a just employer on top of it all. Please send donations (and other correspondence) to: Catholic Peace Fellowship, P.O. Box 4232, South Bend, IN 46634, (574) 232-2811.

BOOK REVIEW

THE KINGS AND THEIR GODS: The Pathology of Power. By Daniel Berrigan SJ. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 2008. Reviewed by Bill Griffin.

The mind of Daniel Berrigan is a fertile place, as this remarkable, difficult to categorize text makes abundantly clear. On one level, it is a close reading of the two **Books of Kings** from the Hebrew Bible. Interspersed are citations from modern poets and writers as well as recent statements from Plowshares activists on trial or in prison for acts of civil disobedience against our government's serial wars. These interruptions jolt us into seeing how this Hebrew history, whose final edition scholars date to about 550 BCE, can morally enlighten our dark, post-9/11 world.

The deepest strata of his book are his own poems and what I call diary/meditations. In them, Fr. Berrigan shares the faith and beliefs of a lifetime courageously witnessing nonviolently against war. Consequently, this book is a formidable teaching tool, an introductory guide to the study of the great prophetic tradition of the Hebrew Bible, and an inspiration to the future peace movement.

The two **Books of Kings** present a history of Israel after its transition from a tribal confederacy, directed by priests and judges, and its decision to be ruled by a monarch. Samuel, the judge and prophet, had very clearly warned the Israelites about the oppressions a king would subject them to, but he was ignored. For Daniel Berrigan, the two **Books of Kings** contain a "brimstone brew" of monumental ambitions, lust for power, murder and war. But, he writes, "In these historical accounts, I suggest the Bible is 'deconstructing' itself. Ironically, the Word of God acts like a fiery lens, placing empire under scrutiny. Thus the biblical method: let the kings wage wars, let them worship an approving deity lodged in a stupendous temple... Let them join religious sacrifice and battle, legitimating, even sacralizing slaughter. And in this imbroglio let them drown the eyes in pieties. Allow all this! The Word of God—audacious, subversive."

There is, as well, the faltering development of a countervailing force, a nonviolent spirit against the kings, in the rise of the Hebrew prophetic tradition. It is a fundamental discovery of Jewish religious genius. Daniel Berrigan traces its incremental

growth in the accounts given of Elijah and of Isaiah, most especially.

Fr. Berrigan is aware of the enormous amount of scholarship which has been done on these two books. He acknowledges their Deuteronomic authors. His non-academic approach is accessible and inspired by the essential conflict which the Hebrew Bible sets up between God's will and human ambition. He holds that the Bible's focus is on social justice, the care of "widows and orphans" and not only on social stability, as kings and state religions would have it.

The two **Books of Kings** cover the four hundred-year period from the end of King David's reign in 971 BCE to the shattering destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Babylonians, and the tragic exiling of the Jewish people in 586 BCE. Daniel Berrigan's account of this thicket of history is clear, nimble and incisive. I would like to précis three moments in the arc of his narrative. They illustrate the development of the moral perspective of the Hebrew prophets and the connections Daniel Berrigan wants us to make to our own day.

The first has to do with King Solomon, whose history by itself takes up half of **1-Kings**. It includes the construction of the first Temple in Jerusalem on a grand scale. Solomon had inherited a vastly expanded and wealthy Israel from his warrior/king father, David, who had conquered many lands. He built further prosperity on international trade, a kind of globalization of its day, and on very many military alliances. Wealth swept away Israel's former, simple agricultural society and brought sudden riches to some and poverty and royal slavery to others.

A prodigious number of Israelites was press-ganged into forced labor for the construction of the Temple. The number, specifically given, is thirty-thousand men. Scholars calculate that this would amount, proportionately, to over ten million people in terms of today's US population.

Daniel Berrigan argues convincingly that Solomon's Temple is a political act. He follows the later prophets, who criticized the domination of institutional externals, like temples, over the practices of charity. To truly understand the Solomon story, we must turn, he writes, to the prophet Jeremiah who wrote, "You keep saying, 'this is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.' This catchword of yours is a lie; put no trust in it. Mend your ways and your

doings, deal fairly with one another, do not oppress the alien, the orphan and the widow..." (Jer. 7:3-5).

Fr. Berrigan's assessments are nuanced. He credits Solomon's reputation for wisdom, but the examples of it come from early in his reign, when he "is unspoiled by imperial ego." The "great pyramid" of Solomon is described so effusively that he perceives an implicit message: "With the advantage of hindsight, knowing the awful outcome of the grand start, we sense the secret intent of the scribe. Does he imply ever so subtly that ambition and pride have overvaulted, that the great pile reeks of inflation, ego, inevitable decay?"

No prophets are active in the Solomon narrative, speaking out against the enlistment of religion into imperial politics. For Daniel Berrigan, the absence of prophets is why the "self-understanding of king and people is beclouded." However, prophets appeared on the scene immediately after Solomon's death and their stories stand out in the rest of the two books. Elijah, "the plain-spoken," is foremost and his story is the second narrative moment I want to allude to briefly.

Elijah is portrayed with many human qualities including, at times, that of fear for his life. But, he is fearless in his challenges to King Ahab and in condemning his violence. Nevertheless, this brutal king persisted in his worship of Baal, a fertility god, who required human sacrifice.

Elijah cares for widows and those who suffer injustice and defends them, but, in Fr. Berrigan's reading, he is also, himself, enmeshed in cultural and religious violence. He is in transition away from violence but still resorts to it. The Baal prophets whom he bests in a contest, he then kills.

In his meditation on this violence, Daniel Berrigan finds a mirror which reflects our own institutional violence. He makes damning connections: "The story [of Elijah and the prophets of Baal] offers a wild parody of a given culture. Our own?... We and our Baals. The gods of culture—invoked, stroked, placated. A dementia of death lies heavy on us.... Death as an acceptable social method, invariably cloaked in military overtones.... Thus we are rid of enemies, adversaries, delinquents, the aged and 'unproductive,' the criminalized, the unwanted unborn. And lately of 'terrorists' and the regions that protect them."

The third moment I will highlight comes near the conclusion of the **Second Book of Kings** and focuses on Isaiah. Daniel Berrigan argues that the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, speaks of nonviolence through Isaiah's lips. He bases his strong case on **Isaiah** (22:8-11). (This reference is not printed in Daniel Berrigan's book; this omission is my one criticism. On the positive side, I found the reference in Abraham Joshua Heschel's book, **The Prophets**.)

The context for this wonderful prophecy is as follows. King Hezekiah has built up his army and fortified Jerusalem to resist the siege of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib. Realizing that he is about to lose the struggle, King Hezekiah turns in desperation to Isaiah. The Lord of Hosts is angry because the people "looked to weapons" as their source of security and, "You did not look to Him Who created the city, or have regard for Him Who planned it long ago." Isaiah, then, prophesies against the arrogance of Sennacherib who mysteriously leaves. The city is miraculously saved.

Daniel Berrigan explains: "Eccolo!... The king who prepares for war is disobedient to the will of the Holy.... With Isaiah and his noble company, the prophets have entered biblical history. A new order is in place; it bespeaks compassion, gentleness, fiery truth, an end to murder as the chief instrument of power."

Daniel Berrigan, SJ is the author of important books of essays and poetry all of which have grappled with the major questions of our day: those of war and peace and those of faith and belief. For the folks who have not yet encountered his work, I want to recommend three of his more recent publications:

And the Risen Bread: Selected Poems, 1957-1997, Fordham University Press, New York, 1998.

Wisdom: The Feminine Face of God, Sheed and Ward, Chicago, 2001.

A Sunday In Hell: Fables and Poems, Bunim & Bannigan, New York, 2006.

I would also recommend the documentary film, "Investigations Of A Flame: A Documentary Portrait of the Catonsville Nine" which came out in 2001. It was made by Lynne Sachs and it is available as a DVD. Daniel Berrigan participated in that act of civil disobedience, carried out in May, 1968, against the war in Vietnam. The film is an excellent introduction to the recent history of the peace movement in this country.



Sally Elliott

Edgar Forand, 1917-2008

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then eighty years old, was. I said to the couple, ex-Catholics and atheists, "Yes, he's a man of deep faith." There was a dead, embarrassed silence. Of course, they didn't understand. But it was his faith in Christ that centered Ed's life. His faith made him free. It was a grace-filled freedom that allowed him to live in the confidence—not the presumption—of the friendship of Christ, Our Lord. In St. John's Gospel, Jesus called those who believed in him friends: "You are my friends if you do what I command."

There was a quiet intensity in Ed. He had an interior life. He was very devout, regular in his prayer, the rosary, retreats, and daily Mass, for he knew that the Eucharist, the True Presence, is the essence of Catholicism. Nourished by it, he incarnated it in his life. He was a man without guile. And like Mr. Blue of Myles Connolly's novel, he would go to the roof of his building at sunset and marvel at the sights of the city and God's creation.

For Ed, glory was not in having his name in print or going to demonstrations or getting arrested. His glory was Christ, a friendship that he incarnated in his fellowship with people like Walter Kerrell, Ed Brown, Charlie Killian, Earl Ovitt, Arthur Sullivan, Johnny Carter, Smitty, Sister Jeanette, Eleanor, Lena and many others. He made them smile, and they him. Nourished by Holy Communion, his communion was with them. He was a friend. Thomas Aquinas wrote, "There is nothing on this earth to be more prized than true friendship." His friendship extended to many, and always revolved around food and drink, whether hosting at his apartment or being hosted, or going with his Nativity friends to dinner in Little Italy.

Of those whom we have loved and lost, Thornton Wilder said that, "what is essential does not die but clarifies. The highest tribute to the dead is not grief but gratitude." Thanks, Ed. "Good night sweet prince—And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."



The Outlawry

Fritz Eichenberg

A Personalist Economics

By DOROTHY DAY

[This is excerpted from the September, 1956 issue of the CW—Eds. Note.]

A Puerto Rican woman, very poor and disheveled, went into a tavern to make a telephone call, and, having difficulty in getting her number, began to make a disturbance. She could not speak English, and when she objected to being evicted from the tavern, clung to the door and resisted. The bartender called the police, who in turn called the Bellevue ambulance from the psychiatric ward where she was taken. She continued to make a disturbance there about her children, but none could understand what she was talking about, and, after a few days, she calmed down and told another Puerto Rican woman that they were being very well cared for.

Ten days is the usual stay for observation at Bellevue psychiatric ward. In about ten days, a social worker from the department of welfare went to the tenement where the woman lived, to make a routine visit—they usually went there every two weeks. She knocked on the door and no one answered. Trying the door knob she found it open and went in. As soon as she opened the door a dreadful smell affronted her. Entering the three little rooms, she found there two dead babies, lying in bed, dead from starvation. They had been dead some days.

The house was one of those rabbit warrens, a huge tenement, filled with little apartments, so crammed, so filled with people with problems, with the desperate struggle to make ends meet, so filled with noise, that if the babies had cried, who was there to hear them? Radio and television, the noises of the streets, the noises of other children, all those sounds drowned out the weak cries of those starving children who lay there mute and failing until death took them. O God, You have to make up to those little ones, what they have suffered here on this earth! O God, how to understand this mystery of suffering. How to forgive the heartlessness of men who grind the faces of the poor, who trample on their hearts.

Whose fault is it? Where to lay the blame? Was it the fault of the impatient tavern keeper or bartender who called the police in the first place instead of patiently trying to find out what the woman wanted, why she was having a hard time in getting her telephone message across. She had been trying to call the camp up in Nanuet where her two older children were being cared for. She had been deserted by her husband, she could not work, she could not speak English.

Was it the fault of the welfare people? They are usually overworked, exhausted with the suffering they see around them. They are doing people a favor by not calling on them more than once every two weeks. Was it the fault of the authorities at the Bellevue Psychiatric hospital? They should have had people there who understood Spanish and could find out the situation of the woman as soon as she was brought in, of course. I should say that the fault was there more than anywhere else.

I know that several of our friends who could not assert themselves had been made to wait all day long at the clinics, and on two occasions have actually been forgotten, left sitting on the beaches until after five o'clock after a long day seeking help. So much money is spent on buildings and so little on people.... People always fall back on the phrase, "It is the system."

We need to change the system. We need to overthrow, not the government, as the authorities are always accusing the Communists "of conspiring to teach to do," but this rotten decadent, putrid, industrial capitalist system which breeds such suffering in the whited sepulcher of New York....

We enjoy reading our parish bulletins. One time there was an article of Fr. John J. Hugo reprinted, and there are always quotations from spiritual writers and instruction. It is an old familiar thing, this parish bulletin, but there is a new syndicated one in some churches whose teaching I find most objectionable. In the last few issues there are detailed articles on how to make money grow, treating money as though it were something alive, instead of a means of exchange, quite worthless in itself. There are elaborate examples of a Mr. C. and a Mr. D. who made gifts to the Church of \$2,500 a year for ten years which amounts to \$25,000. And yet it costs them only \$12,500. What miracle is this? You figure it out this way. You get out of paying federal income taxes on that amount and that is a great saving. The money is reinvested by the financial wizards of the Church and the dividend on that is reinvested and all added together, and counting on increasing prosperity and employment for the next ten years, it is all very sim-

ply put down on paper like an example in arithmetic....

I must say that when I think of a dollar, I think of beans for the soup line, or lodging for someone sleeping on the sidewalk, or a growing farming commune, and the increase I love to think of is the growth of life in the soul and the soil; and the seed falling into the ground and dying and bringing forth much fruit. You should see the bushel baskets of tomatoes and cucumbers being brought into the House of Hospitality in town, and the shelves of jars filling up in the barn for winter. This is real wealth.

Peter Maurin would give forth right now with an essay on money lending at interest, and the evils of the capitalist, acquisitive society and how it is immoral to use money to make money.

We need to study more how to build up credit unions, producers' cooperatives, maternity guilds, and other forms of mutual aid, building these new institutions within the shell of the old.



FRITZ REMEMBERED

New York, NY

Dear Friends,

Long before I met Fritz Eichenberg here in NYC at the Pratt Graphics Center where I was a student, I knew him through the illustrated pages of his books. I grew up in a small town in northern California; the one library was a special place. There I found and read *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. The stories and Fritz's images are forever in my mind.

Pratt Graphics Center, part of Pratt Institute, offered courses in all types of graphic art: etching, engraving, lithography, silkscreen, letterpress printing and innovative techniques. Fritz enlisted artist-teachers from all over the world. He organized exhibits, among them, the 1966 Bi-annual International Miniature Print Exhibition and Printmaking in Modern American Illustration (1979). I had my work in both of these exhibits, thanks to Fritz for these opportunities. Fritz also began publication of an important graphic arts periodical, *Artist's Proof*, which featured articles and art by current and past printmakers. Fritz was outstanding as an artist, teacher, editor and writer. Two things he valued highly were hard work and integrity. These values he imparted to those he knew and worked with.

That Fritz was German, I knew, but never thought much about. Coincidentally, we both share German heritage. He was born there and I've spent two years of my life in Germany. One year was in Berlin where I studied at the Academy of Fine Arts under an exchange fellowship, the DAAD program. The second year was in the Rhineland where I had a job teaching. The city I was in, Ludwigshafen, is not far

from Cologne where Fritz was born and spent the early years of his life. Cologne is noted for its magnificent cathedral. Surely Fritz knew this well and was no doubt influenced by the wealth of religious art there. One outstanding work is a huge stone statue of St. Christopher; this a subject Fritz has illustrated and which has appeared in the CW.

Years later, after Fritz had retired from Pratt Graphics Center, his wife called me and came to visit. She brought a woodblock with her and asked me if I could make some prints from it. I hand burnished a couple, but the printing really required a press. At the time, I didn't know what the subject was. Later I saw it in the CW; it was his St. Joan of Arc. As time goes by, I appreciate Fritz more and more. When I see his work in the CW, I feel his presence near.

How did I come to the CW? One day, walking home from Pratt, I looked down at the sidewalk and saw the page of a CW newspaper. It caught my interest because of the amazing artwork—here's a paper that uses original art—not photos or computer images. I was so excited, I told my art/book collector friend, Gil Williams, that I'd seen Fritz's prints in the paper. He suggested I send in some of my artwork. I replied that I wasn't Catholic, and he said, "Neither is Fritz—he's Quaker." I am always so happy when from time to time, I see my work included in the pages of your paper.

—June Hildebrand



Apples

June Hildebrand

JOURNEY OF HOPE

Washington, DC

Dearest Friends,

It has truly been an inspiring experience of hope and healing to be part of the Montana Journey of Hope. There have been twenty-two speakers on the Journey, including murder victim family members, death row exonerees, and relatives who have family members on death row. Marietta Jaeger-Lane, whose daughter Susie was kidnapped and murdered on a camping trip in Montana thirty-five years ago, has been a guiding light to many on the Journey. A founding member of the Journey of Hope (JOH), she, along with Bill Pelke, another JOH founding member, were instrumental in bringing it to Montana.

Also on the Journey are Charlie King and Karen Brandow, who have inspired many Montanans with their amazing life-giving music. There are also some incredible abolitionists from around the US. David Kaczynski, (brother of Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, who was captured in Montana and was threatened with the death penalty by the federal government) is also with us. There is also Bill Babbitt, who witnessed his brother's execution. Bill's brother, Manny, who was a Vietnam veteran and suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and mental illness, was responsible for the death of an elderly woman. Our primary host group, the Montana Abolition Coalition, has been exceptional in every phase of organizing—from providing hospitality and transportation to organizing speaking events.

Montana is a state of breath-taking beauty. The mountainous terrain is spectacular. Most, but not all, of the people I've encountered are against the death penalty. Journey members have traveled hundreds of miles around this beautiful state to do what we can to turn the tide and help Montanans to abolish the death penalty. There are currently two people on death row and the Montana legislature is just a few votes short of repealing the death penalty.

A moving tree-planting ritual right at the exact site where Marietta's daughter, Susie, was abducted marked the beginning of this incredible JOH. During the week I've been here, other Journey members and I have spoken to youth groups, high school and college students, law students, church groups and other public forums. It has been a special time to share the story of my brother Paul's murder, to ask people to pray for Dennis Soutar, the man who killed Paul, and to appeal to people to work to create a society where the mentally-ill poor, like Dennis, get the treatment and help they need so that tragedies like what happened to Paul will be averted.

We have shared our stories at schools at three Indian reservations. At Stone Child College, located on the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation, which is comprised of Cree and Chippewa tribes, I began my talk with a confession and apology. I acknowledged that as a white person, I am a beneficiary of a legacy of genocide and slavery committed against Native peoples. I addressed the pain and suffering that whites have caused Native peoples, and that I repent for my complicity in this suffering. I also spoke about being arrested with Dave Dellinger and others at the Justice Department ten years ago for calling for the freedom of Leonard Peltier—the courageous Native American political prisoner who is serving a life sentence for a crime he did not commit.

There have been many moving moments during the Journey. Among the most moving has been speaking with and hearing the stories of the death row exonerees who are on the Journey. Curtis McCarty spent nineteen years on death row in Oklahoma. Greg Wilhoit spent five years on Oklahoma's death row. Juan Melendez spent eighteen years on Florida's death row. Shujaa Graham spent five years on death row in San Quentin. They are among the 130 condemned to death who have now been exonerated.

As the JOH leaves Montana, we are very hopeful that Montana will soon join New Jersey and be the 15th state to abolish the death penalty. I am deeply grateful for your prayers and support in this great effort to end state-sanctioned homicide.

With love and gratitude,
Art Laffin