



The Hartford Catholic Worker

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St. Martin De Porres House
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"To Construct a New Society Within the Shell of the Old"

December 1, 2005

Dear Family and Friends,

At the end of the summer I heard a presentation about prisoners being tortured in Guantanamo during a retreat I attended. There are over 100 men on a hunger strike. As an Irish-American woman who is at times a political prisoner in my own country, a hunger strike makes me sit up and take notice.

There was a report read by an American lawyer from one of the British citizens being detained. This man had been held for over three years and not charged with any crime. He was not allowed any contact with family. At one point he was held naked, chained by his hands and feet, to an iron ring in the center of a stone floor. My mind immediately went to an image of Christ being tortured before his execution.

I am not a person who talks at length about my religious beliefs. Like St. Francis always said, "Preach the gospel daily, use words when necessary." By the end of the retreat, I knew that God was calling me to act against torture being committed in my name by my country.

I think most good people are people who do not "believe in" torture. It is important for us to realize that not believing in it is not enough. There were probably many good people in Germany who did not believe in gas chambers or fascism. We must be ready to act on behalf of our beliefs. If I want to raise my sons in a country that does not legalize and legitimize the use of torture, I need to take action. If I believe that by engaging in torture our government lowers the bar for the treatment of every prisoner of war in every country, then I need to act. As the daughter and sister of veterans I believe we must outlaw torture to prevent torture being committed on our own soldiers. Torture is a terrorist act. To engage in it to fight terrorism means that we have allowed terrorism to penetrate our hearts.

And so after prayer with my family and community I have decided to join 25 other Catholic Workers on a march to Guantanamo to perform the work of mercy of visiting the imprisoned there. Though it may seem ridiculous to defy the U.S. ban to travel to Cuba and march on a pilgrimage to end torture, this act challenges the system and maintains my



nonviolence and my belief that we are all responsible for the acts of our government.

I hope that I can put aside my own fears and act upon my beliefs. As Dorothy Day said, "What I want to bring out is that a pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions." So, I cast my pebble. Toss a little something into the pond yourself. I call others to stand with me and be counted. If you oppose torture write your senators and congress people. Go to a candlelight vigil at the federal building. Withhold a portion of your tax dollars in protest. Do something!

I leave you with this quote, "The only thing necessary for evil to flourish is for good people to do nothing."

You are all good people. Do something! Please pray for those suffering, fasting and being tortured. Pray for me and my community here in Hartford. Pray for our nation.

In Love and Peace,

Jackie Allen

Anyone who wants to help defray the cost of my \$700 plane fare can send a check to the Catholic Worker!!
And to learn more about this please go to: www.catholicworker.org