The Hartford Catholic Worker

St. Martin De Porres House St. Brigid House



So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

-<u>James 2:17</u>



Dwight working on the latest Green House mural: "Black Mermaids Matter"

Psalm 78

Listen well, O peoples of the earth, to inner promptings of the Spirit; Let Silence enter your house that you may hear. For within your heart Love speaks; not with words of deceit, but of spiritual truths to guide you upon the paths of peace. Do not hide this from your children: teach of the inward Voice, and help all generations to listen in the Silence. That they may know the Beloved and be free to follow the precepts of Love.

> Psalms for Praying Nan C. Merrill

Fall 2023

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The Hartford Catholic Worker is published quarterly by the St. Martin De Porres Catholic Worker community. We are a lay community of Catholics and like-minded friends, living in the north end of Hartford, working and praying for an end to violence and poverty. We are a 501c3 tax exempt organization. We do not seek or accept state or federal funding. Our ability to house the homeless, feed the hungry, and work with the children depends on contributions from our readers. We can be reached at: 18 Clark St., Hartford CT 06120; (860) 724-7066, purplehousecw@gmail. com and www.hartfordcatholicworker.org We are: Brian Kavanagh, Baby Beth Donovan, Anthony Harris, Joshua Collazo, Jacqueline, Ammon, and Christopher Allen-Douçot.

Our Board of directors include: Justin Evanovich, Danielle DeRosa, Sr. Pat McKeon, Rex Fowler, Marybeth Albrycht, Isaiah Jacobs, and James Conway.

A Swarm of Witnesses and a Beloved Community of Givers

During our first year we built a six-foot-tall wooden cross for when we pray the Stations of the Cross every Good Friday at the Subbase in Groton with a ten foot long 4"x6" we recovered from the gutter down by the recently closed trash to energy plant in the South Meadows. On the bottom of the cross Brian has wood burned:

> "Remember, there is a swarm of witnesses We see them Hear about them Learn friendship from them We share their Vision"

Much of the remainder of the cross is covered in wood burned names of our swarm of witnesses. Our swarm begins with Jesus, Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Septima Clark, and dozens of other martyrs, saints, and holy rebels who inspire us. Every year during Holy Week Brian adds to the cross witnesses who have died during the year; some we did not know personally: Sr. Diana Ortiz, John Lewis; others were friends and family: Micki Allen, Joe Foran, Tom Lewis, - all are still with us, watching us, protecting us, leading us, petitioning God for us, guiding us, calming us, and encouraging us. All the while we yearn: for their clarity of moral vision, their companionship, their counsel, their good humor, and we yearn for their steadfastness. This is how we remember them, and in this re-membering the Mystical Body of

Christ grows ever more apparent in our midst- and with It so too grows our confidence that the Kingdom promised rises like a ceaseless tide.

swept away like a child's sand castle built at low tide by waves of justice and mercy sent forth by our Creator, animated by the Galilean, echoed by the swarm of wit-

nesses, and chanted by pilgrims for peace.

There is another swarm that has been with us from the very beginning making it possible for us to do the Works of Mercy by sharing with us a portion of their treasure. Our first donors were friends and family like Gene Flynn, Judy Brown, and the Sts. Francis and Therese Catholic Worker community in Worcester. Our first mailing list began with the Pax Christi/Hartford mailing list which Chris supplemented by going through the phone book adding any group he thought might support our work. Early on we benefitted from a lot of media cover-

age. Soon strangers were writing to us, calling us, visiting us, and supporting our work with gifts of time, talent, and treasure. For many years The kingdoms of this world are being we gave talks once or twice a week at



Communion of Saints

churches, schools, civic groups, and universities, and Chris's travels to the Middle East led to talks around the country. With all this our swarm of supporters swelled enough to sustain our work. Today there are about 1900 names on our postal mailing list, of which about 200 individuals and churches made donations in support of our work in 2022.

During our first five years we did not receive enough support from donations to do this work and so we also had outside jobs: Brian at Friendly House, Jackie at My Sister's Place, and Chris with a roofing crew. We were young. During our last ten years our donor base has remained steady, and our donations have even increased after we became a 501c3 nonprofit. Unfortunately, during this same period attendance at weekly mass plummeted, and the median age of the person in the pew has gone up as the impact of the sex abuse scandal, along with other trends (increased secularity among young people, growing distrust in institutions, the erosion of "Blue Laws") in society, became more apparent. This shift is reflected by our donor base which is getting smaller and older. This worries me (Chris), not so much the rest of the communitymaybe they have more faith than me?

A tool repair shop I once frequented had a great sign behind the counter: "Poor planning on your part does not necessitate an emergency on mine." This is us planning to prevent an emergency.

In our last issue we wrote of distributive justice and cited this passage from the American bishops' pastoral Economic Justice For All: "Every citizen also has the responsibility to work to secure justice and human rights through an organized social response. In the words of Pius XI, "Charity will never be true charity unless it takes justice into account ... Let no one attempt with small gifts of charity to exempt him (or her) self from the great duties imposed by justice."

The guaranteeing of basic justice for all is not an optional expression of largesse but an inescapable duty for the whole of society."

Our plan for the future begins with an invitation to you to com-

mit to acts of distributive justice by sharing a portion of your treasure with the Hartford Catholic Worker. In particular, we humbly request that you prayerfully consider remembering our ministry with a gift in your will or by including the Hartford Catholic Worker as a beneficiary to your life insurance or retirement account.

As the Baby Boomer generation begins to pass, a tremendous amount of wealth will be shared with their children and grandchildren. A May 2023 headline in the New York Times asked: The Greatest Wealth Transfer in History Is Here. Who Will Benefit? The answer? Wealthy and upper middle class white people will benefit. This is because wealth in America has been concentrated in white families via the history of racist policies and practices (e.g. red-lining) that we have written about extensively over the last few years. Black America now has only 1/6th the wealth of white America. If you are white and are likely to have wealth to share when you pass, sharing a portion of it with the Hartford Catholic Worker would be an act of distributive and racial justice. Such an act of justice will ensure our continued ability to welcome homeless folks, to feed hungry folks, and to help our families with their rent, light, and heat bills.

Frankly, I am struggling to write this. Some in our community find it

distasteful, perhaps even crass, for us to ask that you consider becoming a legacy donor to the Hartford Catholic Worker. This only partly explains my unease. What is really difficult is finding the humility to beg, because that is what we are doing. We are begging for your support. Doing so is humiliating only insofar as I cling to my pride. We've written before that we are only God's middlemen and women when we share what has been shared with us. Am I so conceited to believe that our donors don't likewise see themselves as such? Good grief! Begging is an essential spiritual practice for anyone seeking solidarity with impoverished people who beg to survive. Seeking solidarity with impoverished people is an essential spiritual practice for anyone seeking Christ.

We remember;
There is a Beloved Community
We see them
Tell others about them
Learn generosity from them
We share their
Gifts.

If you have questions about how to designate the Hartford Catholic Worker in your will or retirement account consult your financial adviser and check out this helpful website https://trustandwill.com/learn/charity-as-a-beneficiary



Communion and Liberation

Be Like Eddie

Christopher J. Douçot

I was fishing for sallies and wallies (smallmouth bass and walleye) on the Connecticut river in northern New Hampshire when the sky opened, I eased my kayak back into the riverbank alongside the trunk of a mighty fallen oak, and below the canopy provided by its surviving progeny. With the living protecting me from falling water, and the dead from the flowing, I'm reminded that the angels above and the saints all around are constantly buffering torrents and downfalls.

A hundred yards upriver a lone beaver frolicked in the rain. While it slowly turned in the slightest whirlpool created by a rock outcrop that jutted fifty feet from the bank, it periodically slapped its foot long fifty-pound tail creating a *THWUMP SPLASH* that would rival the slap and wake left by an incognito Santa belly flopping from the high board on a Carnival cruise ship. And thus, a couple of semi-aquatic river critters took refuge in a couple of eddies.

I love eddies. I loved Eddie Van Halen on guitar and still love Ed Norton on screen. In high school I envied the charm and dry wit of my classmate Ed Fandel. Ed became "four fingahed Fred" over the winter break of our junior year after an ill-conceived attempt to perform the Heimlich maneuver on a snow blower. Being the ass that most adolescent boys are, I thought it funny to call him "four fingahed Fred"; karma took a quarter century, but after an ill-conceived late-night attempt to massage a power tool, I too have a lifetime 10% discount on manicures.

Eddie Money, Eddie Murphy (both the comedian and the HCW donor and angler extraordinaire), Eddie Vedder, Eddie Munster... all great Eddies, but it's the lower-case eddies that I most desire. Eddies are places on the water where the current turns back on itself. Downed trees, spits of land, islands, rocks, and the flow of another river or brook all create eddies. Eddies

are great for catching sallies because the bass use the break in the current to lie in wait for bait fish, or my crank bait, to pass by. Unable to slice through the moving water as deftly as the bass the minnow ends up in its gut.

Eddies form, reform, and disap-



Bob Macneil

pear all the time as trees fall, sand bars migrate, and beavers build. When the river is slow there may be scant evidence of an eddy, but after a rain, or dam release upriver, a weak eddy posing as placid water can come to resemble the swirling water in the tub when you pull the plug. As the current in the main channel picks up speed, so too does the countercurrent of the eddy. At one point I was paddling furiously "up" some minor rapids only to look to my left and learn that I was moving down river. After a few fierce strokes to the bank I thrust my kayak into a pretty good eddy which then carried me upriver to the puzzlement of folks on the shore who had been chuckling at futility moments earlier.

Anyhow, as I was waiting out the rain, munching celery sticks, and sipping some orange vanilla Polar seltzer, I got to thinking about eddies and realized- while I'm no saint or angel, I can be an eddy, and so can you!

We all need eddies in our lives. When swift forces threaten to sweep us away, we need calm places of refuge. For many the natural world can be an eddy- the forest a buffer from concrete canyons, the sea or plain an awe-inspiring, quiet expanse and antidote to crowded streets and

cacophonous nights. But when such natural eddies are beyond reach, we need to build, and be, eddies for each other. Can your home be an eddy to folks in your community who despite their furious paddling are still being swept away? Can your hug be an eddy for a tormented soul?

The American Heritage Dictionary defines an eddy as "drift or tendency that is counter to or separate from a main current, as of opinion, tradition, or history." We especially need folks to be this kind of eddy when riptides of greed, xenophobia, violence, and vengeance churn, frothing fear and heaving despair. Be an eddy of tender compassion, mercy, humility, and generosity.

Ten millennia past Micah told us that "what is good" is "to do right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with [our] God". (Micah 6:9). So let us go now to do good. Let us walk down to the river to pray with our lives. Let's stand lovingly with the jetsam and flotsam of our society- those deliberately thrown overboard and those who are "merely" the collateral damage of our "way of life"- literally those who are drowning in the Mediterranean and the Rio Grande, and those drifting backwards by low wages and disregard, and be the humble eddy that gives shelter from the storm.

Am I a fool to believe that a few holy, humble troubadours purposefully placed can turn the tides of poverty and war? You tell me; last week I witnessed a dead tree turn a river around because by chance it became wedged between a couple of rocks. Ω

Aims and Means of the Catholic Worker: Labor 5

Each year the New York Catholic Worker publishes The Aims and Means of the Catholic Worker in the original Catholic Worker newspaper put out by our "mother house". We have been reviewing these aims and means as a community and with our board. Over the next several issues we will be reprinting portions of the aims and means (full copy found here) with commentary on what they mean to us and how we are attempting to be true to the charism of the Catholic Worker.

—In labor, human need is no longer the reason for human work. Instead, the unbridled expansion of technology, necessary to capitalism and viewed as "progress," holds sway. Johs are concentrated in productivity and administration for a "high-tech," war-related, consumer society of disposable goods, so that laborers are trapped in work that does not contribute to human welfare. Furthermore, as jobs become more specialized, many people are excluded from meaning ful work or are alienated from the products of their labor. Even in farming, agribusiness has replaced agriculture, and, in all areas, moral restraints are run over roughshod, and a disregard for the laws of nature now threatens the very planet.

While this is/could be a pithy line from a folk song we may have heard- we believe that our lives are more than our work, and our work is more than our jobs.

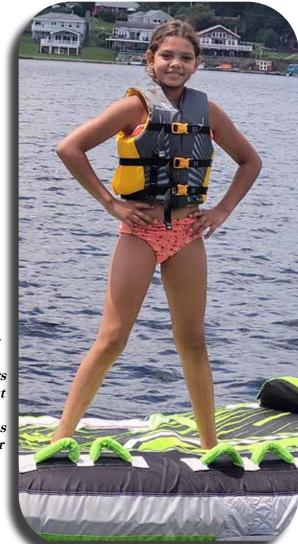
We are more than welders, teachers, bankers, or cooks, and so we should not reduce ourselves, or others,

to a job title. Meanwhile, our work will always be more than what is recognized or paid for. This point may be painfully obvious to our women readers who typically work the "second shift" or are "stay at home moms" who "don't work" but somehow keep the house clean, while rearing children, and preparing dinner...

The common good requires more from us than an eight-hour shift, even more so our holy obligation to those in need. Meanwhile, we doubt time spent undermining the common good, creating need, and/or harming others can be classified as labor. Like a mother giving birth, labor is that which manifests, nurtures, and sustains life. We seek to have jobs, do work, and live lives that foreshadow the Kingdom of God. Ω

Ahimsa 2023

Vee, Timothy, and little Jose building a tower in Beach Pond Vee giving beach combers her best Xena Princess Warrior pose.



Greetings From Kenya Catholic Worker Community!

Iapheth Obare

Catholic Friends of Mentally Ill is a faith based organization by virtue of being a Catholic Apostolate and a medical mission. We are a community of the Catholic Worker Movement. We started in February of 2016 as a group of 10 people living with severe mental illnesses in Siaya County in Kenya.

The story however starts a bit earlier on. It starts with the story of the first leader of CFOMI Japheth Obare. He has experienced paranoid schizophrenia since 1995. In 2015, he had a psychotic episode that his family got involved in. He later developed severe depression as a result of medication put secretly in his food by his family. He started having suicidal thoughts and started planning for suicide. While in the process of doing so, he decided to seek help as well and realized that there was none

around.

He eventually got some help in terms of hope from the British Columbia Schizophrenia Society in Canada. That is how he realized the need currently in the Kenyan mental health space after living in the USA for five years. He decided to do something about it. He organized a group of ten people and with the help of the then British Columbia Schizophrenia Society Executive Director Deborah Conner, we got registered by the Kenya government as a society in January of 2019. Our focus is advocacy, health, and meaningful relationships for the severely mentally ill. The organization is focusing its work in Siaya County in the south western part of Kenya. The area of focus is mental health. CFPMI is a ministry of Schizophrenia Society Of Kenya.

The **VISION** of CFOMI is making life better for the severely mentally ill. This is our primary focus and it's what drives us.

The **MISSION** of CFOMI is three fold namely health, advocacy, and meaningful relationship for the severely mentally ill. This we

hope to achieve by partnering with other stakeholders who want to see a positive change in the lives of people living with severe mental illnesses.

The five PROGRAMS run by CFOMI are:

- 1. Elimisha Jamii Campaign, a mental health education Program.
- 2. Vijiji Program, a community mental health advocacy Program.
- 3. Project Furaha, a psycho social Program.
- 4. Boma Program, a home visitation Program.
- 5. Program Dawa, a medicine Program.

The two PROGRAMS envisioned by CFOMI are:

- 1. Project Karibu, <u>a clubhouse program.</u>
- 2. Project Ubuntu, a Therapeutic farm program.

Other PROGRAMS run by CFOMI are:

- . Tuinuane Program, a membership recruitment Program.
- 2. Rafiki Program, a lay missionary Program.

You Can Support Us In Two Ways:

If the good Lord puts it in your heart to be philanthropic towards our course then we would appreciate it very much. We know we live in a world that is scarce in resources and the resources are finite. So every gift is regarded as a precious resource from the good Lord. The second way one can support CFOMI is by subscribing as a member. All our members are dear to us and

Our Promise of Good Stewardship:

we cannot make it without them. We

do pray for all our supporters.

We consider every gift we receive a precious resource from the good Lord. We direct every donation to its targeted program, provide honest and accurate reports to our donors, and keep overhead costs to a minimum. We handle funds with utmost integrity and hold our missionaries in the field to the same high standards by asking them to document costs and the impact of their outreach. We only spend 5% towards fund-raising and administrative duties. 95% of the raised funds goes directly to the targeted programs.

How We Serve

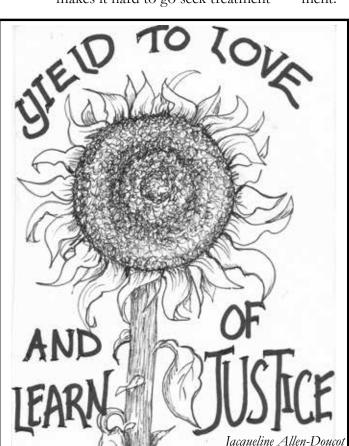
Rather than create new institutions to work with the mentally ill, we support the existing infrastructure of families, churches and

government who are already serving the severely mentally ill. In addition to being the most cost-effective way of serving the severely mentally ill, empowering these churches allows us to support the Church's spiritual mission and its important position of leadership in communities. We also believe in a community based approach in solving mental health problems and not institutionalization of the mentally ill.

NEED

Working with people in the ground, attest to the level of resource scarcity. Finance becomes the central challenge both to us the providers and the patients. There is extreme poverty among patients. You find that patients have no money

to pay for transport to the hospital or even worse, lack food. This makes it hard to go seek treatment



because they would rather go look- 7 ing for food than going for treatment.

Rate of poverty in Kenya is still severe and this feeds into the mental health problem. That is why the majority still relies on Faith Healers and Traditional Healers because they accept different modes of payment like cows, goats and chickens and can even provide treatment on debt while hospitals require cash.

By supporting CFOMI as our member, you join forces with our rafikis who are working day and night to ensure that life is better for the severely mentally ill. Be the change that the world desperately needs. The light that forever shines in the darkest parts of the world. Join CFOMI in making life better for the severely mentally ill. Ω

Sinead O'Connor: A Proud Troublemaker



We were saddened by the news of Sinead O'Connor's passing on July 26th.
Ms. O'Connor was born on December

8, 1966- the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Mother Mary is the patron of cloth workers among others. As a child Ms. O'Connor spent 18 months in the custody of <u>Grianan Training Center</u>- one of several sites of the "<u>Magdalene Laundries</u>", where she was abused.

Drawing upon that experience she infamously tore up a picture of Pope John Paul II during a live performance on Saturday Night Live in 1992. Her misunderstood act of prophetic resistance came a full decade before the *Boston Globe* broke the story of abuse at a variety of Catholic institutions.

"I don't do anything in order to cause

trouble,' O'Connor said in 1991. It just so happens that what I do naturally causes trouble. I'm proud to be a troublemaker.' In her 2021 autobiography, Rememberings, O'Connor said of her SNL appearance, "Everyone wants to be a pop star... But I am a protest singer. I just had to get stuff off my chest, I had no desire for fame." (Irish Times 7/27/23)

Black Boys on Mopeds (1990)

Margareth Thatcher on TV
Shocked by the deaths that took place in
Beijing

It seems strange that she should be offended
The same orders are given by her
I've said this before now
You said I was childish and you'll say it

Remember what I told you
If they hated me they will hate you
England's not the mythical land of Madame George and roses
It's the home of police who kill black boys

on mopeds

And I love my boy and that's why I'm leaving

I don't want him to be aware that there's Any such thing as grieving

Young mother down at Smithfield 5 AM, looking for food for her kids In her arms she holds three cold babies And the first word that they learned was "please"

These are dangerous days
To say what you feel is to dig your own grave
Remember what I told you
If you were of the world they would love
you

England's not the mythical land of Madame George and roses

It's the home of police who kill blacks boys on mopeds

And I love my boy and that's why I'm leaving

I don't want him to be aware that there's Any such thing as grieving Ω

Notes, cont.

Lord of the Starfields Ancient of Days Universe maker Here's a song in your praise Wings of the storm cloud Beginning and end You make my heart leap Like a banner in the wind Oh love that fires the sun Keep me burning... (Bruce Cockburn)

Jacqueline Allen-Douçot

These lyrics from one of my favorite songs were the soundtrack to my summer. It was easy to feel all the love that surrounds our community. We began June by celebrating our Green House Old School kids who are now young adults by attending a Yard Goats game that our amazing board chair (and Husky Sports Hero) Danielle won tickets for. 33 of our finest enjoyed a night on the town! It was so much fun we have been thinking of making it an annual event. Next, we began planning a dinner celebration for the kids who have graduated high school this year and during the COVID years. It was beautiful to be with some young folks we



Zinaya and Fey with a visiting horse.



Mayala and Anniyah, Ahimsa 2023

together for a big grad party and hope to have one at the end of next June. If you would like to be on the planning committee for that, please let us know!

Just after July 4th Camp Ahimsa 2023 began. This year we had 17 kids each week... many of whom were first-time counselors. Dwight was able to join us for a week and we finished a fabulous "Black Mermaids Matter" mural that we will hang up before school starts. Chris took the kids fishing and bowling and led teams in a nature scavenger hunt every week. The ladies of the Columbettes of Griswold made us dinner on Tuesday nights. We had ice cream at Buttonwood Farms. On Thursdays, the counselors went to Ocean Beach Park

while Chris took the campers (when the skies cooperated) to Globe Hollow for swimming with one of our very first volunteers, Kristi G. from Northwest Catholic H.S. We were very grateful for my cousin Loretta coming all the way from Staten Island to help out, and also for my sister Teri who joined us for 3 weeks! Loretta and Teri spent a LOT of time in the water with campers swimming and supervising paddle boarding!! We made lots of art and tie dye shirts. All the new littles that could not swim went home with life-saving water skills! (The American Red Cross reports that drowning is a leading cause of death in children aged 1-14).

I loved watching how the older kids not only mentored the younger counselors but also embraced and supported them in a really loving way. I am so proud of the LOVE that grows in the Green House....building the Beloved Community requires this love as its foundation. To watch the next generations do this work gives me hope for not only the future of the Catholic Worker ... but for our world.

This Saturday we will be back to the regular art/sport lunch routine. Cooks and food pantry supplies are very welcome.

Just after Camp ended, I was invited to join an International group of Catholic Workers traveling to the Netherlands to address the U.S. violation of International Law that occurs when we share nuclear weapons with other nations. (I was able to travel because of the generous support of our friends at the Ithaca Catholic Worker; a consequence of our nonprofit status is that we do not use donations to support this aspect of our witness to the gospel.) We also were able to join with climate activists from all over Europe to highlight the connection of militarism and climate change. With the war in Ukraine and tensions with Russia looming greater all the time, the **Bulletin** of the Atomic Scientists has reset the Doomsday Clock to 90 seconds 'til midnight.

The Doomsday Clock is a symbol that represents how close we are to destroying the world with dangerous technologies of our own making. It warns how many metaphorical "minutes to midnight" humanity has left.

It was wonderful to meet, and act, with Catholic Workers from Europe and all over the U.S. After 4 days of nonviolent direct action, we were issued "ban and bar letters" on our passports that ban us from the EU for one year. One a note of interest: when one of us asked the arresting officers about why the police /arrest process was so peaceful and kind compared to our experiences in the same situations in the U.S., he replied "Your police system is based on gun culture. Here we have 2 levels of unarmed police who respond before an armed officer responds. Every candidate for police, no matter what level, begins the academy with

a month-long study of human rights and the dignity of every single person." It really gave us pause to think about what reliance on guns/weapons has done to our society.

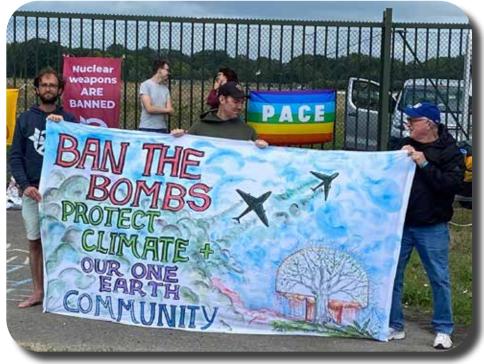
I close by including the statement we gave to arresting officers at the Base:

The whole planet has one common enemy: climate death leading to the end of all life on Earth. We see the nuclear countries and the atomic arms race spreading like cancer and poison. The United States is the main culprit, profiteering from selling weapons of mass destruction and deploying them at bases like Volkel which makes war more inevitable and true peace impossible. By participating in so-called nuclear sharing the Netherlands and the United States

violate the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

We are here to resist the global catastrophes that this weapons proliferation makes possible. We hope through our nonviolent action today we communicate directly with military personnel preparing for nuclear war at Volkel base that they are participants in this system of death.

We also recognize that the militaries of the world who exempt themselves from the <u>Paris Accords</u> and the nonproliferation treaty have chosen a side in the battle for Climate Justice. Through planning producing and spreading their weapons as a cancer to other nations and their own people they have chosen to be on the side of climate death and Extinction, WE CHOOSE LIFE! Ω



St. Martin's Wish List

- ♥ Priests to celebrate Mass with us on the first Tuesdays of October, November, December, February, March, April, and May. Please call Brian at: (860) 560-7318. Let the phone ring...
- Your company around our altar and dinner table at our monthly mass. Dinner at 6:30 at St. Martin House (the purple one), mass at 7:30 at St. Brigid House (the green one;)
- Fresh fruit to share with the kids after school.
- Gifts of time, talent, and treasure to help us perform the Works of Mercy. *Donations*
- can be mailed to: HCW 26 Clark St., Hartford CT 06120. Donations can also be made online by clicking on the "Donate" button at our website: https://www.hartfordcatholicworker.org/
- ♥ Having a birthday? Consider asking friends to make a donation to the Hartford Catholic Worker in your honor.
- Please consider remembering the Hartford Catholic Worker when planning your estate.
- ♥ Thank-you!

18 Clark St. Hartford, CT 06120 (860) 724-7066



Notes From De Porres House



(Please see: Notes, p8)