

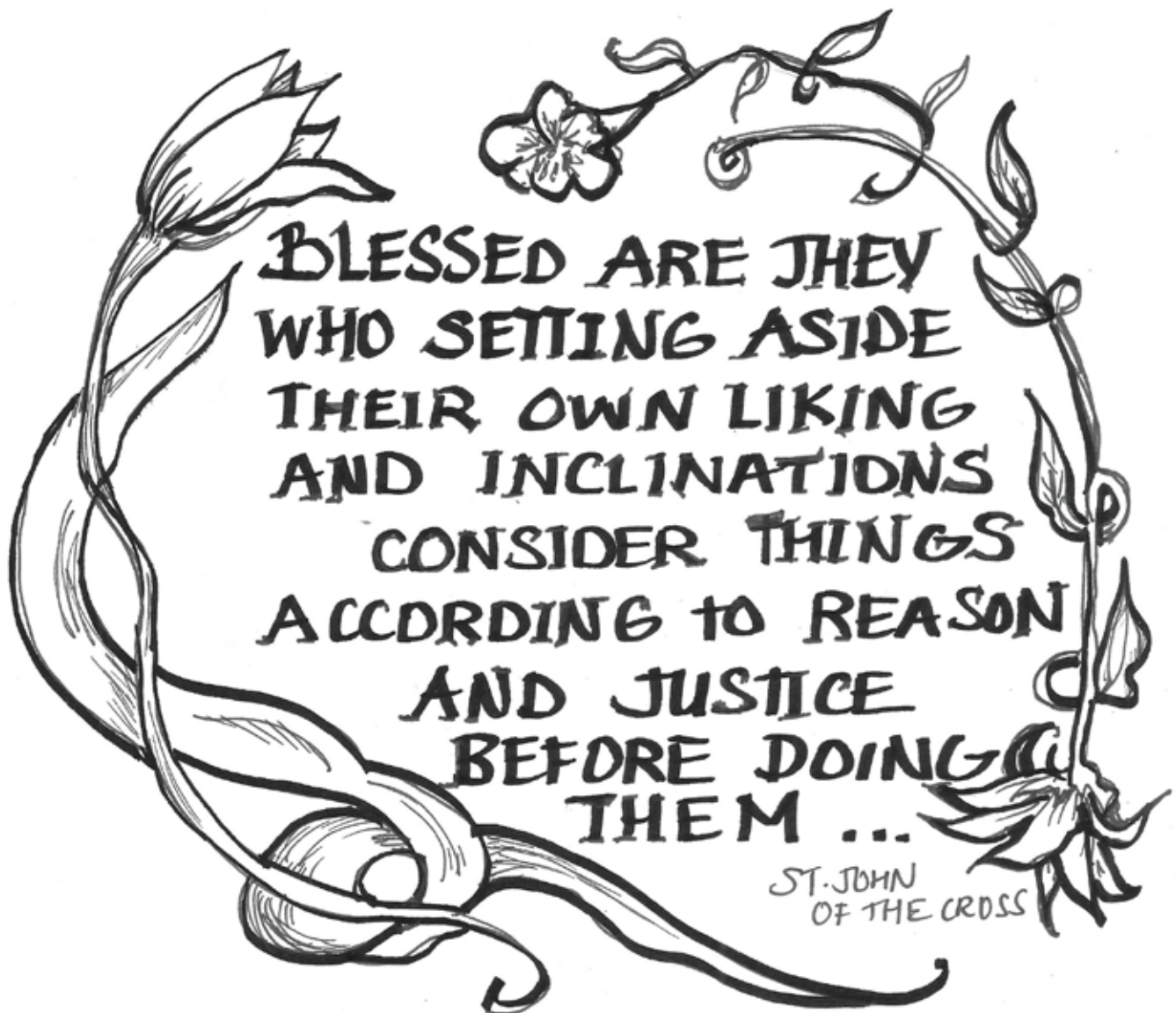
The Hartford Catholic Worker

St. Martin De Porres House
St. Brigid House



Kick at the Darkness 'til it Bleeds Daylight

-Bruce Cockburn



Jacqueline Allen-Douçot

Fall 2025

The Hartford Catholic Worker

Established November 3, 1993

Volume 33 Number 3

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, Jose Echevarria, Jose Gonzalez, Jacqueline, Ammon, and Christopher Allen-Doucot.

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

St. Martin's Wish List

- ♥ Peace with justice, justice with mercy, and life with dignity for all God's children
- ♥ 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.
- ♥ New monthly donors. If you're already a donor please share this newsletter with someone that might also support our ministry.
- ♥ Thank-you!



With one knee newly replaced... and the other waiting to be replaced, Desteni, Rafaelo, Fey, and Ancho helped Chris swim through the air at Beach Pond this summer.



Meanwhile Rondell and Aiden skipped stones and plotted their takeover of the Green House while sitting at water's edge



*Our Father, Mother,
who are in the world and surpass
the world, blessed be your presence, in us, in
animals and flowers, in still air and wind. May
justice and peace dwell among us as you come to us.
Your will be our will. You will that we be sisters
and brothers, as bread is bread, as water is itself,
for our hunger, for quenching of thirst. Forgive us.
We walk crookedly in the world, are perverse, and
fail our promise. But we would be human, if you
only consent to stir up our hearts. Amen. Amen.*
-Daniel Berrigan, S.J.



Christopher J. Douçot

The low, late afternoon sunlight back lit the burgundy petals of a painted sunflower. A goldfinch with its canary yellow body shrouded by black wings pecked at the flower's seeds. It was soon joined by a downy woodpecker. Black and white with red feathers on the back of her head, she was slightly bigger than the finch. They dined together briefly before the finch screeched and flew off, forfeiting the flower to the woodpecker. Meanwhile a couple of butterflies were dillydallying around and about the zinnias. The monarch, richly orange wings outlined in velvety black with white specks, and the female eastern tiger swallowtail with buttery yellow wings framed in black with just flecks of teal and orange on its tail, were like living stained glass windows aloft in a mellow breeze. Closer to dusk the ruby throated hummingbirds returned. Unlike the meanderings of the butterflies, the hummingbirds are deliberate in flight, decisive and peripatetic they dart between the lilac rose of Sharon blossoms, and the peach toned zinnias. The hummingbird will beat its wing more in an hour than the butterfly will in a lifetime. The hummingbird and the butterfly, Martha and Mary, we need them both. I do wish I had a bit more of Mary's verve...

On this, a return trip for the hummingbirds, a bumblebee is sleeping on a zinnia blossom (I'm not making this up, I know I wrote this exact line in another recent essay- but the bee really was sleeping on the flower!); they first feasted early in the morning as the sun was just appearing over the horizon. At that early hour a bumble bee [couple waltzed](#) in the turmeric blossom of a watermelon volunteer. By the time

the butterflies arrive the bees, laden with nectar and pollen, struggle to depart their feast. In a drunken state they fly an unsteady, bobbing



and dipping path, they sojourn on a creamsicle colored zinnia before heading home.

Because I compost my gardens are always full of volunteers. The marigold volunteers are the heartiest. They sprout everywhere. They survive being stepped on, they thrive in cracks, and by late August they are robust and chock-full of blossoms that rival the rich orange of the Monarchs. I have a couple of tomato volunteers this year. In most years the volunteers are cherry tomatoes. I don't like cherry tomatoes. This year a grape tomato volunteered its life and fruit- I don't like them either (neither do the squirrels it seems) but I don't have the heart to pull them out. Another tomato volunteer,



maybe an early girl or Brandywine, sprouted through a crack in the patio back in May. Amazingly it has

survived and produced half a dozen fruit. Still warm from the sun, I quartered one, splashed it with olive oil, a dash of salt, and a sprig of oregano; I'm not sure there is a better summertime snack aside from ice-cream.

The fruit of this watermelon blossom grew to the size of a hen's egg before the squirrels got it. A second watermelon volunteer has produced a second lil' watermelon. It's now about the size of a goose egg, but it's late in the season. It will grow some more but it is doubtful its flesh will ripen ruby red before the first frost. The same fate awaits a butternut squash volunteer. Its vine is already beginning to wither, its lone fruit soon to be orphaned before reaching maturity.

There's a rhythm to life if we take care to notice, a harmony too when we take care together.

At its best this world is a symphony, at our worst we're a cacophony silencing the songbirds and the children's laughter with missiles and blockades, deprivation, disease untreated, smokestack belches, and greedy men's disregard.

I can't carry a tune. I can't even clap in time with the church gospel choir. I don't know what a chord is, and written notes are hieroglyphic to me. But I have an ear for beauty. I hear it in the giggle of Valentina, and I see it in the way her brother Rafaelo cares for her. I smell it in the beans Jackie spends hours cooking, and I feel it in the gripping embraces of those who love me.

Dorothy Day often repeated Dostoyevsky's line that "*the world will be saved by beauty*". I know it will be because we already have been. The question we face today is whether we will continue to be saved by beauty

(Please see: *Conspiracy*, p5)

Musk's reverse-Robin Hood playbook is not new. *Electric Boat has used it for years*

4

Colleen Shaddox

(This reader submitted opinion essay was originally published by the [CT Mirror](#) on April 15, 2025. Reprinted with permission.)

U.S. Americans worry that public funds for essential services are being diverted to the obscenely rich. They fear that it's happening in the dark, where we cannot witness, let alone fight, this thievery.

I'm scared too but not surprised, because I spent about a year of my life tracking the millions that General Dynamics Electric Boat gets from Connecticut taxpayers and how state law explicitly prohibits us from getting information about what public benefits (if any) result. I faced down a table full of lawyers defending the privacy of this highly profitable corporation (General Dynamics netted 3.8 billion last year) as I was denied answers about where my (and your) money went.

Elon Musk has nothing on Electric Boat.

Let me begin at the beginning: In 2018 Connecticut pledged \$83 million in aid to Electric Boat, ostensibly so that EB would expand Groton operations, create jobs and purchase more from in-state vendors. As this five-year program was wrapping up, the War Resisters League asked me to investigate whether EB created the economic benefits the state was promised.

The first step was obvious: EB had to report annually to the state Department of Economic and Community Development on payroll,

in-state purchases and other information that would indicate whether it was acting as a stimulus to the economy. I requested copies of those reports under the Freedom of Information Act. I received documents that were largely redacted (Picture a blacked-out letter from a Soviet gulag). I appealed to the state's Freedom of Information Commission, where my request was opposed not only by the state but by Electric Boat. The commissioners seemed sympathetic – after all I was asking about the return on the investment

Now that Musk and company are dismantling the federal safety net, I doubt these workers will get raises to keep the cupboards full. I learned that EB contests property tax assessments, so its valuations to the towns where it resides, Groton, New London, and Norwich, are reduced by millions. That's money made up by the average homeowner, or by landlords who pass expenses on to their tenants.

I started asking myself, "If EB is such a treasure, why isn't New London more like Greenwich?"

Don't get me wrong: I'd rather hang out in New London, with its far superior music scene. But the poverty rate is 20 percent in New London, with racial disparities that make it much higher in some communities. Furthermore, EB's presence may be raising housing costs. One bedroom apartment rents rose 37% in New London from pre-pandemic 2020 to 2023 – the biggest jump in the state.

Imagine the state

spent the \$83 million it handed to EB on the region's schools, micro-loans for small businesses, green conversions, and so on? Seems like a better strategy to fight poverty.

Is EB really the best investment Connecticut can make? I've been unable to get the data necessary to answer that question. I suspect that had the answer been "yes," the governor and EB's CEO would have held a joint press conference to trumpet the numbers that I was denied.

(For more details please see: [Electric Boat and the CT Economy: A data based report](#).)Ω



Dr. Evil's Lair from [Austin Powers in Goldmember](#)

of my tax dollars – but agreed with EB's counsel that state law explicitly includes FOIA exemptions for businesses getting assistance from DECD.

To state the obvious: corporate welfare should not get its own special exemption from FOIA disclosure.

I did get some satisfaction from FOIA requests. I learned how many EB employees qualify for SNAP and Medicaid. Not a lot (316), but the common wisdom is that EB jobs are good jobs, period. People with good jobs don't need food stamps.

The Provocations of Dorothy Day ⁵

Kate Hennessey

(Kate is one of Dorothy's grand-daughters. This is an excerpt from the October 2023 *New York Catholic Worker*. We will publish the remaining provocations in subsequent issues)

Face Your Fears

During the turmoil of the 1960s, Dorothy once said: *"I know what human fear is, and how often it keeps us from following our conscience."* She spoke of many kinds of fear—of losing material goods, of poverty, and *"there is the strange business of bodily fear"* which she experienced when she was shot at while visiting the integrated community of [Kooinia](#), Georgia, during the civil rights movement.

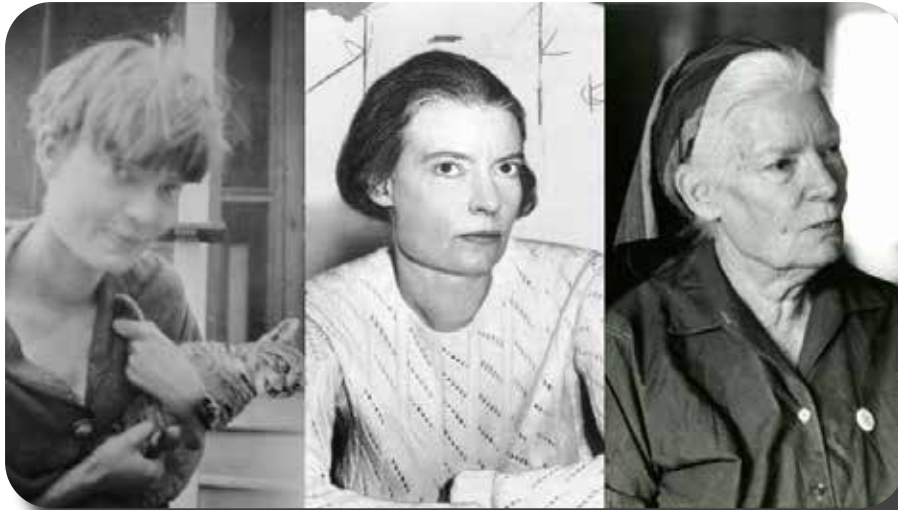
Dorothy had a penetrating gaze, unnervingly direct and unsettling.

Her daughter Tamar, my mother, referred to it as *"the Look,"* which she had, too. I can still feel this Look from two women who knew much of the human condition, yet kept their fierce and loving eye on it. I can try to be no less courageous and honest than they, but if I'm not

conscience or vocation; of commitment and of sacrifice. There is fear of making a fool of yourself, and what is that but fear of revealing your deepest self only to have people attack or ridicule it? In response to this, Dorothy said, so be it—we are fools. And there are those who

live in a constant, indescribable fear for their own lives or the lives of their families and communities. I can't speak for this fear. But there is one fear I feel compelled to write of above all others—fear for the Earth and her creatures. I can't help but wish deeply that science

and religion would come together to face this most dire fear. We now all live, I am sure, whether admitted or not, with a deep hum of anxiety and **(Please see: *Provocations*, p7)**



careful, this discussion of fear could be a long one.

There is fear of speaking the truth; of not being enough; of other people's neediness; of one's own

Conspiracy cont.

if we no longer see it? Will we seek beauty? Will we make beauty? Will we even continue to recognize beauty in a world where the rich and powerful, the arrogant and prideful, the selfish and self-centered seem determined to celebrate ugly?

[Jose Abreu Anselmi](#), the late Venezuelan pianist, conductor, and thinker, believed that *"music is a conspiracy to commit beauty"*! Brilliant!

Would that we all conspire to commit beauty to save each other and ourselves. Can we dare to conspire? Do we dare resist the ugly by participating in the latent beauty all around us, magnifying and refracting it in places where poverty and violence have been let loose by souls seemingly incapable of noticing the beauty of a gentle breeze, the fragrance of a spring lily, or even the touch of God in the caress of a loved one?

I think we can.

I know we must.Ω



If I Get Disappeared

6

Paul Nyklicek

(Paul is active with VFP- [Veterans for Peace](#))

“Disappearing” people is a time-honored practice of authoritarian leaders. The simplistic logic is that if someone is expressing an idea that the leader doesn’t like, the answer is to make that person disappear. And so, theoretically, the problem is eliminated.

The President of the United States recently spoke to the leader of El Salvador suggesting that several more concentration camp-style prisons need to be built in the Latin American country to be filled with those deemed by the President and his administration to be “bad people.” The American President made it clear that he was very open to deporting “homegrowns”, presumably American citizens, to places like CECOT prison.

So far this has only been happening to particularly vulnerable people like students, children and others born outside the United States. It is happening in classic dystopian fashion with heavily armed men wearing masks forcefully abducting people from their neighborhoods and even one case of extracting someone from their car by using an axe to break the window in order to take them into custody.

People like Mahmoud Khalil, Rumeysa Ozturk and Kilmar Abrego Garcia did not have the luxury of time to reflect on what they would say to their loved ones before being abducted. What might they have said to their families and friends if they had the chance?

I’ve wondered what I would say to mine if I were in their place and I had the luxury of time that they didn’t.

I’ve thought about it and here is what would I tell them:

I want you all to know that we are beyond the point of wondering if the United States is becoming a fascist dictatorship. It is. We are in the midst of a hostile takeover by white supremacist and Christian nationalist

it should not come as a shock if the day comes when people born in the United States, who have lived their whole lives here will be deported on some fabricated pretext.

I have written to members of Congress expressing my concerns and opposition to my government’s policies and actions. I have participated in a number of public demonstrations aligned with my beliefs. Some of what I have written has been published online. As farcical as it may be, there’s enough out there for someone to label me an Enemy of the State. Of course I don’t want to be “disappeared” and a part of me thinks it’s very unlikely to happen. After all, I’m not a public figure and I have no significant influence over anyone. And yet...

I want you to know that even when people seem to be the “problem” they are not the actual problem. The problem is a toxic ideology linked to a mythological fiction of “American greatness” propped up by the usual suspects of Might Makes Right, The End Justifies the Means and Greed is Good. Those playing the role of oppressors are actually the first victims of the problem because they have been infected by its toxic power and they were unable

to resist it. They have been captured by its corrosive influence as were the ancient kings of Tolkien’s Middle Earth when they accepted the rings from Sauron and became enslaved to them.

Remember that the power projected by authoritarians is entirely based on various forms of violence designed to induce fear and hopelessness. Even as they attempt to concentrate as much materialistic power as possible, this is their Achilles heel. At first

(Please see: *Disappeared*, p9)



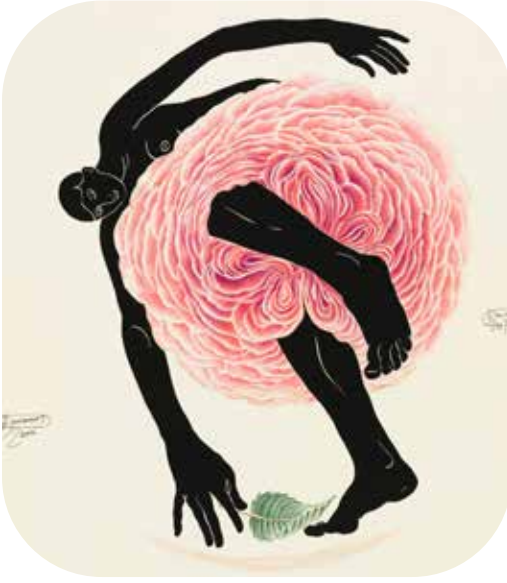
[Mother of the Disappeared](#)

[Br. Robert Lentz](#)

forces. There is no point in expressing disbelief about this. It is happening and what truly matters now is how we respond to this situation.

The freedom to speak openly and honestly about government policy and actions is, at present, only protected by citizenship status and the government’s adherence to the U.S. Constitution. If one is not enough of a citizen, not enough of a “real American” one’s security of person and home are now tenuous at best. The traditional protections of citizenship may themselves disappear and

Provocations cont.



Reverence for the Earth

Daina Kaireviciute

fear. And of sadness.

My mother quoted often to me from [Liberty Hyde Bailey](#), horticulturist and author of *The Holy Earth*, published more than one hundred years ago, in which he called for a spiritual relationship with the land and cooperation rather than dominion. He said: “Of all the disturbing living factors, man is the greatest.” It isn’t easy to see all land as holy.

It is hard for me to see Staten Island as sacred, where Dorothy began her conversion, Tamar was conceived and where both were baptized. It has been abused for decades, including containing at one point the world’s largest man-made structure, the Staten Island dump.

But Dorothy had an extraordinary sense of the earth’s beauty. She had an instinctive awareness of what the Irish philosopher [John Moriarty](#) meant when he said the land never loses its integrity.

“We need a reverence for the earth,” Dorothy wrote. “I took my grandchildren one day out.. and said, “Come on out and let’s kiss the earth.” “What if we all, biologists and theologians included, get up from our tasks, from our pew and research labs, desks and assembly lines, and

run outside as if the very devil were at our heels, to kiss the earth? Why is it so hard to express love for the ground we stand on, this giant globe pulsing with mycelium and lava, microbes and all manner of beings? Is it because we have so thoroughly bought into the notion of dominion that to bend ourselves to the earth is an impossibility? Or is it because the fear of its loss is unbearable?”

How I wish that we all look about at our landscape and feel such love and beauty that we will do whatever is in our power to protect it and to help it be what it longs to be in every particle of its being. To see the earth glow and sparkle with creation and feel full of love for it, even as we may be overwhelmed by fear for its destruction. Can we allow ourselves to grieve for what we are losing and yet not be afraid? Can we find the courage to do what needs to be done?

Let’s give courage to one another. Let’s be curious and not afraid. Dorothy said that we need to trust Christ when he tells us to not be afraid. Seamus Heaney and his wife, Marie, often visited Connemara in Ireland where my husband and I lived for years, and occasionally we would see them walking down the streets of Clifden. While I never spoke to him, I felt that moment of grace we receive from a person who sees the world as it is and yet still loves it dearly; perhaps even more so, the Look of a poet. The last words Seamus Heaney texted to his wife before he died, were **Noli timere—Be not afraid.**Ω

Blackberry-Picking

Seamus Heaney

for Philip Hobsbaum

*Late August, given heavy rain and sun
For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.
At first, just one, a glossy purple clot
Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.
You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet
Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it
Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for
Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger
Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam-pots
Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our
boots.
Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills
We trekked and picked until the cans were full,
Until the tinkling bottom had been covered
With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned
Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered
With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.*

*We boarded the fresh berries in the byre.
But when the bath was filled we found a fur,
A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.
The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush
The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.
I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair
That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.
Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.*



[Kreg Yingst](#)



Lovely Lilly

photo by her sister Desteni

in December when we close for Holiday break, I pray to God that folks will come forward to help with after school, or food pantry, or clean ups... Even a 2 hour a week commitment would be a blessing! Brian is retired and cannot drive, so he needs help getting to the Friday vigil and to the store. In a Catholic Worker community there is little room for retirement.

The rest of our community consists of young folks that grew up in our program, some since they were five years old (welcome Pito!!). They sometimes struggle to make the transition from a guest receiving hospitality to community member keeping the place together. Many of these kids have lived through the trauma of families enmeshed in mental illness, prison, addiction, poverty, institutionalized racism, and on and on. They, *we*, long for a sense of belonging and a purpose driven life; life at the Catholic Worker can provide that especially when the job market most open to our peeps is low paying, low status work that makes it nearly impossible for them to purchase a vehicle or save enough for a security deposit. A [living wage in CT](#) is far greater than our minimum wage-which is far greater than the federal one.

In return for room and board they become de facto community members and help us run the show. To be honest, these kids have been our saving grace. They do a lot of the work we are getting too old to do, because they cannot yet do the administrative/organizing/social work as-

pects of our ministry, they end up doing a lot of the grunt work. We pray that they can keep with us long enough to grow into the ongoing responsibilities of our work.

It's ironic, right?, The Catholic Worker is also low paying, low status work- but somehow it is meaningful work. Maybe it's not work. Maybe if the adage that must come from a folk song- "our lives are more than our work, and our work are more than our jobs", is true then; it's not the work, it's the life we are trying to live: the sharing, the relationships, the solidarity, that are the font of meaning.

Our beloved Sasean will be returning to the community in October. He helped us deliver food all through Covid. His goal of becoming a parole officer has been derailed by the prohibitively high costs (for him and many, if not most of our kids) of a degree. His great heart and soul have us wishing we could find him a scholarship sponsor.

At times it feels to me like my role in the community is being the mother of 10 (*ed. Note: 10?! Pshh- try 100*) or so teenagers- a thankless job if ever there was one!

There's also the challenging dynamic of elders choosing to live in voluntary poverty to avoid paying war taxes and the younger folks growing up impoverished not having the desire to live in voluntary poverty; it's like expecting young adults who grew up involuntarily hungry to embrace fasting. We all struggle together. There are few models in the movement that can show us a way forward. Dorothy Day has a quote that sums up life at the Worker for me: "*Life itself is a haphazard, untidy, messy affair.*"

We struggle to keep repairs up, clean up the messes left behind by our smaller, intermittent guests: brother mouse and his minions, keep the weeds at bay, and the bathrooms respectable. There's always laundry in need of doing and fridges in need of cleaning- but so too is there always a need for respite to care for our sanity. The "[little way](#)" of constant shite jobs is not much fun, or conducive to self-esteem boosting, but it is the work at hand. We welcome cleaners and organizers, weed whackers and repairers!! Unlike Dorothy, we will not send you to clean all the bathrooms. Dorothy had passed by the time Chris first visited him the Worker in '87, but the rite of sending first timers to clean the bathrooms hadn't- we wouldn't stop any intrepid toilet scrubber from crossing our threshold.

This summer, as we watch the fallout from the latest mass shooting- of little kids attending mass no less, our work at the Catholic Worker seems more important than ever. We know,

as Dorothy Day taught us, the only solution is love. For us, this love means teaching conflict resolution to the youngest and most disenfranchised in our community. At summer camp Ahimsa we can do this work in a more full-time way. Something about living together as a family over the course of weeks gives us many opportunities to help young people find a way to regulate their emotions and behaviour in a way that is not harmful to each other.

Recently a grandpa whose 2 grandchildren he is raising from the grandparents housing across the street let us know the change he saw in his two young grandsons after weeks at camp. We delighted in having these two boys with us, they gave us many opportunities to work through the troubles they were experiencing in their relationships.

We also felt the joy this summer of a gal who came to us as a teen and struggled to find her place in the community. At camp she came into a full sense of herself; buoyed up by the love she experienced she was able to shed a negative, harsh, and critical persona. We LOVED watching her joy and fabulous sense of humor win over her peers. I live for those moments. I can see how life altering love and community can be. We feel strongly that if these HIP Steps (from the [Help Increase The Peace program](#)) were learned from kindergarten on our communities, our cities, and our nation would be stronger.

We are grateful to the Griswold Columbiettes for fund-raising that enabled us to take the kids once a week out to Town Pizza for dinner. Janice of that group, and her husband Erich, did pottery with the kids. We couldn't have done the work without Mary Beth Farrelly Albrecht and my cousin Loretta O'Reilly Pappas who came to camp with great energy, enthusiasm, and unconditional love. We are grateful to my sister



Valentina, Aurora, Baby, and Lil' Aniyah at camp

Disappeared cont.

glance this may seem absurd but such power inevitably generates extreme arrogance in those wielding it. They quickly get stuck in what could be thought of as a kind of materialistic fundamentalism. They believe in a myopic reality consisting only of things to be acquired, controlled and used. This is why they regard people as mere objects. This mindset traps the oppressors in an illusion of omnipotence that blinds them and makes them quite vulnerable. This is what happened to the British in India in the 20th century.

So don't be afraid and don't lose hope. That's what they're counting on.

I know that when human beings start looking and acting like monsters it's very tempting to hate them and go to extremes to make them stop doing the horrible things they do. But if we hate them and kill the "monsters" we will be doing the same to the human beings stuck inside the monster suits. We can't prevail if we let ourselves go over to the dark side.

As important as it is to remain physically nonviolent when resisting tyranny, it is equally crucial to be spiritually aggressive. Challenging as it may be, our task is to help those

who oppress us reconnect to their true humanity. Oppressors serving the authoritarian leader need to be repeatedly confronted with the truth that they have forgotten their true identity. They need to be reminded of their core humanity. We need to help them remember who they are so that they can exit the monster suits they've been trapped in and reclaim their true personhood. This is what happens when the military and police start refusing to follow orders and soon after dictators fall from power.

I want you to know that violence often produces shame and humiliation in those who it impacts. This is the universal experience of dehumanization associated with being shamed. Shame breeds violence and violence breeds shame. So take great care to shame no one and to accept no shaming from anyone. Reject the temptation to assume the role of victim as this simply becomes another trap that fools us into believing that our hunger for vengeance is justified.

Authoritarians imagine that violence is their servant and that it will induce a respectful acquiescence in the people being ruled. This is the mistake they make again and again. Blinded by arrogance, they do not

comprehend that it inspires exactly the opposite response. They do not see that freedom is the birthright of every human being and that the desire to experience freedom cannot be extinguished.

We become truly free when we know that we are loved and deserving of love. Love is the revolution. Our liberation is completed when we choose to share the love within us with others and allow ourselves to be loved. Great love begets great courage. We set each other free when we help each other know this truth with our words and our actions.

I love you all very much!

This is what I want you to know and carry with you if I get disappeared. Ω



Notes, cont.

Teri, and Mimi and John from the former Saint Helena's church who helped with food donations from Whole Foods, Rev. Bob Hooper from St James Episcopal and gardeners from St. James and also from St. Tim's along with a host of individuals who answered the call on Facebook to keep the food pantry full which enabled us to feed lots of folks while Camp was occupying most of our time and energy.

Many thanks to all the folks who donated backpacks and school supplies. Because of the generosity of so many people, we were able to help many immigrant folks in our community this summer, people who work very hard for little reward and get no benefits, people that we know by name and whom we love who have unjustly become the scapegoats of our government. Peter Maurin spoke of the Worker as a place that provided a space where it made it possible "for people to do good". We are so grateful for all the folks in our community who do good and help us to do good too.

Please pray with us to the Holy Spirit to send us loving people who are willing to do good in a beautiful, but tough, place. We also beg for people to stand up and resist the absolute terrorizing presence of a government that believes only in force, fear, and violence. Remember our friends George Rishmawi, and Sahar Al Sharif from Palestine, and Um Haider from Iraq, friends who are just trying to raise their kids and grandkids, just like us, despite the violence exported by our government. Our tax dollars demonize them and destroy their neighborhoods. Sahar you may recall visited us in 2001 when she came to the US with her daughter Marwa to have a bullet from an Israeli military sniper removed from Marwa's head. Sahar writes to Chris several times a week to ask how he is feeling and to offer her prayers for his healing; never does she complain about the difficulties of her own life- difficulties that we are far more responsible for than she is.

We beg God to fill our hearts with mercy

and love so that we may follow the commands of Christ, who asks us to love our neighbors as ourselves, and our enemies too, who commands THOU SHALL NOT KILL, and whose love we pray pours into our souls by way of the Holy Spirit.

Please pray for us. We are praying for you. Ω



**Lift a pint, or a solo cup, to our dear Baby Bethanne Donovan.
We love you sistah!**

Notes From De Porres House

Jacqueline Allen-Douçot

"The wisdom of the Desert Fathers includes the wisdom that the hardest spiritual work in the world is to love the neighbor as the self; to encounter another human being, not as someone you can use, change, fix, help, save, enroll, convince, or control, but simply as someone who can spring you from the prison of yourself, if you will allow it."

-Barbara Brown Taylor

The prison of myself can be overwhelming.

Mostly I shun the Wisdom of the Desert Fathers. As someone who has lived in a community for over 35 years, I resent the men who got to go live by themselves in a cave or a grotto and spend all their time praying and meditating. I struggle to find 20 minutes a day to do contemplative prayer. It was probably pretty easy for the Desert Fathers to love their neighbors as themselves since their neighbors were 30 miles away! I connect more with Dorothy Day and the "city mothers" who know that *"love in practice is a harsh and dreadful thing."* This line comes from one of Dorothy's favorite novels, [*The Brother's Karamazov*](#) by Fyodor Dostoevsky; it



Vianai and Aniyah chilling on a brisk morning at camp. Thank-you Marisol, a camper from long ago, for the blankies.

continues: "...compared with love in dreams. Love in dreams is greedy for immediate action, rapidly performed and in the sight of all. Men will even give their lives if only the ordeal does not last long but is soon over, with all looking on and applauding as though on stage. But active love is labor and fortitude, and for some people too, perhaps, a complete science."

When you are face to face, back-to-back and on top of your fellow human beings it is way harder to love them unconditionally, but it keeps one humble.

Our community is in a state of transition, which means upheaval. Ammon is starting a program at UConn to get his MSW in conjunction with Husky Sport. Chris is recovering (sorta) from knee replacement and is trying to heal up before his other knee is replaced in December. He lives with chronic pain and a diagnosis of spinal stenosis that speaks to this as an ongoing struggle for him and us. Beth and I are at the age when we can get Social Security... and are overwhelmed with the work and balancing the relentless needs at the Worker with care for our aging bodies. Beth has decided that she will retire

(Please see: Notes, p8)