



Rochester Catholic Worker

Rochester, New York — Spring 2011

Mary Farren

One of the original group that started the Rochester Catholic Worker in 1936, Mary Farren, died January 28 at her ancestral home overlooking Canandaigua Lake.

Mary was a student at Nazareth College when Fr. Ben Ehmann returned from New York City where he had just heard Dorothy Day speak about the poor and marginalized. Fr. Ehmann started a study group of students to explore what could be done in Rochester.

Over the next five years the group expanded and the feeding of the hungry took hold at various locations on the north side of the city. In 1941 the Rochester Catholic Worker took the bold step of purchasing the present building, at 402 South Avenue, and naming it St Joseph's House of Hospitality.

Mary Charles Bigham Farren was mother, mentor, counselor, activist, social worker, humanitarian, and friend. Her father, George Bigham, raised sheep and her mother,



1916-2011

Anne, sold real estate while Mary grew up in the house overlooking the lake. The Notre Dame Retreat House now crowns the upper hill that the family deeded to the Redemptorist Fathers.

She married Arthur Farren in 1943, and they raised four children: Patrick who died in 1998, Mary Anne, Margaret, and Christine in the Nineteenth Ward. Mary worked with

the Monroe County Social Services as a home finder and administrator connecting many foster children with caring families. Throughout the years she maintained friendships with many of the foster parents.

Mary was also involved in the founding of Bethany House, a Catholic Worker facility serving homeless women and children located now at 1111 Joseph Avenue. Along with keeping the art of letter writing alive, she was an active listener, keeping in close touch with family and friends. She graciously passed on her appreciation of poetry, spending time in the garden, horseback riding, creating art using paper and found objects, camping, walking in nature, and the joy of downhill sledding.

She believed in living simply so that others may simply live as well as seizing the day, "Carpe Diem." In addition to the three daughters that survived her and cared for her at home these last years, Mary had five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Son Patrick who died in 1998 was the director of St. Joseph's from 1967 to 1969. ☩



Fr. Ben Ehmann and Mary Farren

A Celebration of Mary Farren's Life

by Rev. Chava Redonnet




Mary Bigham Farren, who helped to give St. Joseph's House its birth 70 years ago, gave our community one last gift in early February. We celebrated her life with a memorial service in our hospitality room, led by Fr. Bill Donnelly, a close friend. Thank you, Mary, for giving us this opportunity to remember you!

The room was crowded (over 100 counted): we brought in extra chairs and still there were people who stood throughout the Mass. Lots of people who have been part of this House in the past 60 years or so were there: Farrens, Scahills, and others. Mary's little great-grandsons (her son Pat's daughter's children) were there. A woman carrying her small child spoke of Mary having been her family's case worker when she was growing up, and said she had received a birthday card from Mary every year since.

Others remembered Mary's homemade cards and her work as a Girl Scout leader. Stories were told of her baptizing her grandchildren with water from Canandaigua Lake. Fr. Donnelly did not have the reading, which was the Beatitudes, and asked us to call them out. Between us we remembered all the Beatitudes, which described Mary so well: Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice.

Brian Coughlin and Linda LoCastro led the music, with beautiful renditions of "In the Garden" and "When the Saints Go Marching In." After communion, they sang "I'll Fly Away."

We clapped and sang, and the room was filled with the joy of a spirit released, after a life so well lived. Go with God, Mary! And thank you. 

In November 1966, Mary donated her body to the University of Rochester School of Medicine. At the time she wrote the note below to the first-year medical students who would be working on her donated body.

To the students who will work on this cadaver:

The rotting human remains from which you learn the muscle, bone and glandular structure, has housed a soul. It is my request that you treat the total and separate parts with respect. It is my hope that the opportunity to study "first hand" will facilitate your work with patients who may come into your life.

Please respect them, see in them LIFE - that divine element that is infused by God and by Him snuffed out - in good time.

As a student nurse, I recall the dread with which I approached a cadaver. Don't feel that way - by your study you will better serve the living - even as I seek to do.

MARY B. FARREN

“Bread For All” Going Strong!

by Paul Frazier

Archives are not a strong suit within Catholic Worker communities. For many, their newsletters offer the best evidence of what happened and when. So with a humble hand we share with you, and carve into the history books of St. Joe’s, the good news of the rise of Bread For All Bakery, St. Joe’s community-supported bakery project.

A year ago we experimented with a small-scale bakery project: offering good bread to those who can afford a loaf and that same good bread for those who cannot afford a loaf.

“Everyone eats, no one goes hungry.” Eucharist in daily life. In January of this year you, the support community of St. Joe’s, brought 110 subscribers to the project. You committed to purchasing a loaf a week for ten weeks. The loaves have received great reviews: a pound-and-a-half loaf, organic, loaded with just enough oats and sunflower seeds and flax, a sandwich loaf that takes to thin slicing. We are proud of this signature loaf.



Robert

Our trainee, Robert, who is part of St Joe’s “Employment Training Program,” has excelled in his work. Offering a traineeship to a member of the community

is the main purpose of the project. Robert has mastered the weighing scales, how to transform a sponge into a bread dough, working at the bench,

scaling and forming loaves, and translating volume into weight. He is a joy to work with. A second trainee is joining us as this article goes to the editor.

The bakery is also blessed with two neighbor volunteers, Maggie and Tammy. They both have jumped enthusiastically into the rhythm of our 3-day-a-week baking schedule. They help with all aspects of production, and when the last batch goes into the oven we go up to the second floor of the bakery at 220 Mt. Hope Avenue and share the silence of meditation until the oven buzzer goes off.

Bread For All has begun a weekly dessert for the St. Joe’s meals: chocolate chip cookies; vegan (known only to the bakers) chocolate Valentine’s cake with red heart; and carrot cake with cream cheese icing. We are taking seriously the call to reduce obesity and diabetes by creating desserts that are far superior to packaged, poor-quality snack food given to the poor as an afterthought.

We offered sweet potato and pumpkin pies at Thanksgiving (orders surpassed our goal of 70). We brought out Irish Soda Bread on St. Patrick’s Day. For the Easter season, Bread For All is offering to our subscribers and friends traditional Hot Cross Buns!

The Hot Cross Buns will be made with organic flour, organic raisins, and real butter. The buns, 6 to a package, will be ready on Palm Sunday and can be picked up at St. Joe’s from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. To order call Bread For All at 585-278-7780. Leave word with



Rachel, our coordinator. We ask for a \$5 donation and will take orders until Wednesday, April 13.

If you are not already a subscriber to Bread For All – receiving a weekly loaf of our great whole wheat bread, talk with Rachel about becoming a part of this piece of St. Joe’s history. Let the history records show that work is back into the Worker! ☞

Calendar

March

- 20 Food & Hair Clinic
- 27 Pancake Breakfast for Haiti Food Program

April

- 13 Bike Repair Opens
- 18 Shelter Closing
- 18–24 Semi-Annual Maintenance House Closed
- 22 Good Friday Stations of the Cross
- 24 Easter

May

- 1 Feast Day of St. Joseph the Worker
- 30 Memorial Day



St. Fiacre's Update

by Chris Phillips, farmer

This year the Microfarm will begin renting in Henrietta to consolidate growing locations, develop greater crop production, and follow better organic practices. St. Fiacre's is re-organizing into one single year-round CSA program with increased produce choices for members. CSA payments convert to a gift economy this year.

"Gift gardening" projects with local churches continue. Thanks to St. Joseph's in Penfield for leading the way, particularly Chris Doyle and Tim

Murphy. New initiatives are coming from Artisan Church and Greece Baptist.

We hope to bring food to farm markets, under the initiative of Woody Flagler. Woody worked with the Microfarm last fall through St. Joe's "Employment Training Program," which was designed to provide income and skills to members of the guest community. It was great to have Woody on board. I hope he can continue and see his goal of a St. Fiacre market enterprise blossom.

The farm welcomes a new Farm Apprentice, Tim Braley, who comes via Nazareth College and Iraq Veterans Against the War. Tim's commitment to extend nonviolence throughout his lifestyle has brought him to pursue organic farming.

The three winter Roundtables the farm sponsored with St Joe's were lively. Harry will be putting together some more subjects for second Fridays this spring. A small spinoff group is meeting to explore and try out "The Catholic

Worker Retreat" which was an annual fixture in Dorothy's life and in the movement. If you want updates, please call St. Fiacre's, 585-288-1073.

Thank you to Mike and Annie O'Reilly, and Brigit Klement Moyer, whose generosity made our last two farm vehicles possible. Thank you to Judy Misiurewicz and an anonymous donor whose gifts have made it possible for Bethany House and Grace of God Recovery House to have some or all of a CSA share. ☪

House Comings and Goings

by Rev. Chava Redonnet

Our house has been graced this winter by a quartet of 24-year-olds—an interfaith quartet representing all three Abrahamic religions.



from left to right: Rachael, Dani, Eli, and Kevin

Kevin has been here about a year and will soon go back to Texas, but we are hopeful that he will be back to Rochester later in the spring to help in the creation of an Islamic soup kitchen in the city. We will miss him.

Eli has been with us since October, and before returning to Grand Rapids in late April, intends to travel to El Salvador on a study trip with me. I am so grateful for all his help in getting St. Romero's off the ground. **Dani** joined us in December from Rockville Maryland, and will be here for 7 to 8 months. The whole community is learning a lot about Judaism from this observant Jew who loves his faith so much and who dreams of one day starting a "Jewish Worker." Who knows?!

Finally, **Rachael**, the first of the group to turn 25, came to us in January, from Buffalo. We are grateful for her sweet presence. She is taking over the business end of the bread program from **Kate**, who left us last month to return to Chicago with her little dog, Puja. Thanks so much to Kate for getting the bread program going!

Our peripatetic **Tom** went to Phoenix to visit his new grandson, Dylan Jacob Young, but now he's back with us. We have welcomed **Jim Yacopucci** back after a hiatus of 15 years or so. He's currently doing his decision-making month with us.

On the second floor, **Mark** continues to recover from his heart surgery, and it is a joy to see him doing so well. **Vandy** is with us, as well, and helping daily in the kitchen. **Yue** is a

graduate student at RIT. Being from China, there are no funds for his housing, and we are delighted to offer him a home with us. He says, "I can only hope I will have a chance to do something in return in the future when my situation improves." We are glad he is here.

Amidst all this happy news, there is one very sad note. Our **Joseph Tamba Moore**, who has been trying for many years to get his asylum petition granted, has been turned down and is facing deportation to Liberia. Our hearts are heavy. There is a slim hope of appeal, which is also very expensive. In addition, Joseph is grieving the death of his brother, Fayiah, in Africa.

In his seven years with us, Joseph has become our brother. He was the best man at Sarah and Kevin's wedding in 2004, and in 2010 he was one of the people who laid hands on me in blessing at my ordination. He has worked so hard, recovering from a stroke in 2001 as well as years on the

street. He has gone to school, worked as a greeter at Wal-Mart, made many friends. There was a glad day about two years ago when he got his driver's license. We are so proud of him, and now, we fear we will be saying farewell. Please pray for our Joe.

Other house news: we gathered in December at the home of **Linda** and **Martin** for a holiday celebration, and had the joy of the presence of three-month-old **Aniela Foos** (along with



Aniela

her parents, **Sarah** and **Kevin**, of course!). In January we all went down to Piffard for an overnight retreat at the Abbey of the Genesee. The highlight of the retreat was a moonlit, and very cold, late-night walk. (All that preparation, and everybody remembers the *walk!*)

The community has graciously allowed me to use the dining room for worship services on Sunday mornings. We have named our little community Oscar Romero Church, or St. Romero's for short. Mass is at 11:00 a.m. Please come visit us some time!



Say Hello to Peg Gefell

I have been preparing the noon meals at St. Joseph's on Thursday and Friday for a little over a year. For 30 years previous, I owned and managed a catering and restaurant business in Rochester. I embrace this current opportunity to share my kitchen skills with the guests at St. Joseph's House.

My goal is to provide the same meals at St. Joe's that I would serve my own family and customers. The House has encouraged and supported me. Fresh produce, olive oil, butter, and other unrefined ingredients are the raw materials I request, and they are provided. This has allowed me to create meals we are proud to serve. In addition, I am working with Bread For All, St. Joe's community-supported bakery. My former commercial kitchen at 220 Mt. Hope Aveue is now producing Bread For All's organic bread and desserts for Rochester families and St. Joe's tables.

Flowing from this urban-based food preparation is a related possibility. Paul Frazier, who helps out with Bread for All, and I are currently discussing a rural retreat center. Paul has lived at Slocum House in Syracuse, a Catholic Worker House with its focus on Jail Ministry. Their bakery, Glory Bee, became the model for Bread For All. Last year we planted and harvested a bounty of garlic for use at St. Joe's. We are interested in expanding those efforts and integrating them with food and spiritual needs here in the St. Joe's community. ☞

Meet...

Rachael
Morlock



Thank you to everyone in the St. Joe's community who has extended such a warm welcome since my arrival in Rochester. Although I'm not far from my family in Buffalo, I'm grateful to everyone who has helped me feel at home here.

I've come to the Catholic Worker with the intention of shaping my life around the values of compassion and gentle personalism. Since graduating from Canisius College in 2008, I have been introduced to service work through the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Portland, Oregon, and Catholic Charities Service Corps in Buffalo. In both placements, I was honored to work with women and children who are homeless. These experiences have directed me to St. Joe's where I hope to deepen my understanding of and commitment to the works of mercy in my daily life.

More than anything, I have been lead to St. Joe's by my desire to work in a place in which the lives, gifts, and struggles of every individual are held sacred. During my year here, I look forward to taking an active part in the constant creation of an inclusive, peaceful and constructive environment. I am excited to fill the role of bakery coordinator and joyfully anticipate the blessings and challenges ahead! ☞

Meet...

Eli
Woodbeck



I'd like to begin by thanking the community for having me. It has been a blessing to be at St. Joseph's—living, working, and learning. I come from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Last May, I graduated from Aquinas College in Grand Rapids with a degree in Communication and French.

I was searching for an opportunity after college that would allow me to see and experience both the beauty and reality of life. Despite honest attempts, I struggled to find an opportunity with which I was content, but with the support and encouragement of a close friend, I decided to explore the possibility of life in the Catholic Worker.

It was then that I truly began to feel God's pull. Now, my time here has reached six months on March 1: a time that has helped to affirm my strengths as well as address my weaknesses. The challenge and reward of the work is made evident as I humbly realize the simple but merciful acts I am called to perform.

This life that seeks to reconcile my beliefs with my words and actions causes me to become more consistent in my efforts. Still, it is God's love that sustains me, leading me to share in a better quality of life with those around me. ☞

Haiti Catholic Worker Food Program

by Sarah and Kevin Ahimsa

As food prices climb, we again turn our thoughts to the most vulnerable people in the world: the elderly and disabled people in Haiti. Our food program supports 50 people with fresh, local, home-cooked meals twice a week. Our three dedicated volunteers in Haiti, Mariverge, Marceline, and Somane, keep the program running even when Sarah and Kevin are in the United States.

Please join us for some pancakes on March 27, and we'll try to raise enough money to keep this program going throughout the year! For details, see ad on back cover. ☞



Remembrances of My Father by Frida Berrigan

Phil Berrigan stood before the court. It was October 1968. He was on trial—with eight others—for burning and pouring blood on the paperwork of war, the draft files that send young men off to Vietnam. He would be sentenced to three-and-a-half years in jail.

He told the judge: “From those in power we have met little understanding, much silence; much scorn and punishment. We have been accused of arrogance. But what of the fantastic arrogance of our leaders? What of their crimes against the people, the poor and powerless? Still no court will try them, no jail will receive them. They live in righteousness. They will die in honor.

“For them we have one message, for those in whose manicured hands the power of the land lies, we say to them: Lead us. Lead us in justice and there will be no need to break the law. Let the president do what his predecessors failed to do. Let him obey the rich less and the people

more. Let him think less of the privileged and more of the poor.

“Less of America and more of the world. Let lawmakers, judges, and lawyers think less of the law, and more of justice; less of legal ritual, more of human rights.

“To our bishops and superiors we say: Learn something about the gospel and something about illegitimate power. When you do, you will liquidate your investments, take a house in the slums, or even join us in jail...”



Again and again, for the next 34 years, in courts all over the country, Phil Berrigan would stand resolute and righteous before power, explaining his motivations and actions in clear, declarative sentences. He would accept the consequences without flinching. My brother and sister and I watched him walk into jail and prison fearless and full of joy more times than we can count.

Phil Berrigan was a fearless activist, but he was also a father who made fearsome oatmeal—gloppy, flavorless (unless burnt counts), hot muck designed to “stick to your ribs” in the cold half light. In the battle of the bowls, we played the impassioned activists and he was the heartless and impassive judge.

But, rather than be late for school, we ate the oatmeal, submitted to the miso soup (equally foul stuff) and pulled our stocking hats low over our ears before leaving the house. He watched us all the way down two blocks to make sure the hats stayed on. Try telling the man who does not blink at a five-year prison sentence that only geeks wear winter hats.

The folk troubadour Charlie King sings “Count it all joy, for a life well lived is well worth living.” My dad loved that song. He would hum it as he painted houses, washed dishes, made soup, pumped gas, cleaned paint buckets and fixed things around the house. ☞

Excerpted from the New York Catholic Worker newspaper, December 2010.

St. Joseph's House of Hospitality
Rochester Catholic Worker Community

Some of us live in houses; some of us live on the street; some of us have a room of our own, or a bed and a place to keep; some of us have a cot or piece of a couch or patch of floor to return to each night; some hold special positions of power and roles with specific responsibilities, some do whatever they can. Our aim is to try each day to "build a new society in the shell of the old" as we practice the various works of mercy and labor with whatever resources, physical as well as spiritual, that we have been given at the time.

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House Needs:

Prayers	Sugar	BLEACH	Hoodies	Athletic Socks
Butter	Boots/Sneakers	Toilet Paper	39-gal. Trash Bags	Paper Towels
Laundry Soap Powder	Jeans/Cords	Coffee	RAZORS	Toothbrushes/Paste
Men's Underwear (32-44)	Jelly/Jam		BATH TOWELS	Deodorants

6th Annual

Pancake Breakfast
*for Haiti**

Sunday, March 27, 2011

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

St. Joseph's House, 220 South Avenue

\$5, all you can eat!

**Proceeds benefit the food program for the elderly in Borgne, Haiti*

Celebrants for

5:00 p.m. Tuesday Ecumenical Service

We suggest that you call the House in case the service time or celebrant has been changed.

3-1 Tim McGowan	4-26 Fr. Bill Spilly
3-8 TBA	5-3 Rev. Chava Redonnet
3-15 Chris Phillips	5-10 Fr. John Firpo
3-22 Donna Ecker	5-17 Deacon Bill Coffey
3-29 Minister Sandy Whalen	5-24 Fr. Bob Werth
4-5 Fr. Jim Callan	5-31 Deacon Tom Cleary
4-12 Fr. Bill Donnelly	6-7 Fr. Larry Tracy
4-19 Minister Joanne Kaiser	