



Rochester Catholic Worker

Rochester, New York — Spring 2012

Public Stations of the Cross *Good Friday, April 6, 2012*

St. Joseph's House, The House of Mercy, and Rochester Pax Christi will once again enact a public Stations of the Cross in downtown Rochester on Good Friday, April 6, beginning at 11:00 AM in front of the Kodak Building on State Street. The purpose of the Stations is to publicly repent for the many ways in which Jesus is crucified today—in the cruel treatment of the poor, in America's commitment to growing inequality in the name of "free enterprise," in our country's continued killing of innocent and "enemy" alike while the Church whose Founder commanded us to love our enemies and do good to those who persecute us stands by silently, in complicity.

Please join us. The walk around downtown Rochester, stopping at various locations that symbolize the contemporary Crucifixion, takes about two hours. A sample Station from last year is printed below:

Second Station: Jesus Carries the Cross Frontier Field

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You,

People: Because by your Death and Resurrection You have saved us.

Leader: The Statue of Liberty bears the inscription, "Give me your poor, your tired, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Yet when the poor cross our borders, the ugly spirits of nationalism and prejudice arise, calling us to exclude "illegal immigrants." In recent years, the fear of "terrorism" has been used to intensify the fear of "The Other," leading to harsher treatment of "illegal immigrants." Hundreds die every year trying to cross the border from Mexico into the U.S. Between



Public Stations of the Cross at Rochester's Hall of Justice

1998 and 2004, at least 1,954 human beings died trying to cross the border. One-hundred twenty-eight bodies were found in the six months preceding March 31, 2009. Closer to home, ICE agents patrol the bus stations and trains of upstate New York, demanding ID from travelers and making a mockery of the cherished American ideal of "freedom." The federal detention center in Batavia incarcerates many immigrants. Some of our loved ones from the House of Mercy and St. Joseph's House have faced the chilling terror of ICE, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security.

LET US PRAY

People: Jesus, when the Holy Family, fleeing the wrath of the Roman Empire, went to Egypt, You were an illegal immigrant to that land. When Joseph's brothers and father went to Egypt in time of famine, they too were illegal

continued on p. 2

Haiti Update

by Sarah Ahimsa

Guerre, pictured here, a petite, expressive woman with a gift for massage and the grace to tell it like it is, has been a member of the Borgne, Haiti Catholic Worker food program since the beginning. When Kevin and I lived in Borgne, she would come to our house every morning to share conversation, coffee, and leftovers from the previous night's dinner, along with an occasional massage for a sore ankle or shoulder. Kevin calls her his "Haitian mother" and her grandson is named after him (Ti Kervens).

Unfortunately her children, desperately poor themselves, were unable to provide for her except for a spot on a bug-infested woven mat for sleeping, and she begged for food in the streets. Guerre was the inspiration for starting the food program when the 2008 Food Crisis more than tripled the price of rice in Haiti and left families little to share with their neighbors like Guerre. The program celebrated its third anniversary in October 2011. (We were also able to provide her with a new foam sleeping mat.)



Our cooks, Marivierge and Marceline, feed 50 elderly and disabled people two meals a week and provide laundry and bathing soap. They also do other works of

mercy including visiting those who are ill and providing community for those who feel abandoned. A majority of the food purchased is locally grown which keeps the donated money at work in the community, rather than going into the pockets of larger agribusinesses in the U.S. who export cheap rice. Using local food costs more, but has the wider effect of helping to support Haitian farmers in addition to those in need of a meal. The cost is \$750 per month.

We appreciate all of the support that donors to St. Joseph's House have given us to keep this program running—with a special thanks to readers of the Casa Maria Catholic Worker newsletter in Milwaukee who donated this holiday season!! Rice prices are climbing again, and Haitians are tightening their belts. Please help us raise the funds to keep the Catholic Worker Food Program in Haiti running in 2012 by participating in two upcoming events. ☞

7th Annual



*Pancake Breakfast
for Haiti**

Sunday, April 15, 2012
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

Stations of the Cross (continued)

immigrants. Teach us that no human being is "illegal." Teach us that we are all children of God, that nationality is an artificial distinction, created by human beings and meaningless in Your eyes. If it is meaningless in Your eyes, it should be meaningless in the eyes of Your followers. We pray especially for Joseph Moore, a member of the St. Joseph's House community for roughly a decade, who is currently facing deportation to Liberia by ICE, despite his many contributions to our community.

Leader: Jesus, Illegal Immigrant to Egypt

People: Hear Our Prayer. ☞

Reflections

by *Rachael Morlock*

Henri Nouwen writes that “our brokenness has no other beauty but the beauty that comes from the compassion that surrounds it.” I can’t help but think of St. Joe’s when I read that. There is no beauty in a night spent under a bridge, or in the ranting of a mind riddled with paranoia and fear, or in a lonely apartment infested with bedbugs. These are not unusual experiences for our guests, and yet every day, I marvel at the grace that greets me at St. Joe’s. The beauty of St. Joe’s lies in the generosity that keeps our house thriving and in the relationships that develop within it and make it a home.

I find beauty in the material wealth of St. Joe’s: the daily supplies of donated socks, clothing, and hygiene products; the abundance of carefully prepared food served for lunch; the financial resources that are converted into prescriptions, birth certificates, bus passes, tickets to detox, and another month’s rent.

I find beauty in the similarly abundant human wealth. We have volunteers who have dedicated their mornings and evenings to making meals and working shelter for years and even decades. It’s not uncommon to catch empathic words of concern and caring exchanged between guests as they share their experiences and the resources that have helped them. And watching my fellow workers and guests, I often witness the reconfiguration of shame and pain into dignity and hope. These interactions show me the



Rachael (standing) and Rosemary taking in Rochester’s famous lilacs.

transformative power of tenderness and trust.

Above all, I find the beauty of St. Joe’s in the guests who give the house its brilliance by making it their home. The folks who come to hospitality day after day and year after year have claimed St. Joe’s as their own, naming it as place of return and reconnection. In their homecoming, they bravely share their brokenness, and allow others to do the same. The guests empower St. Joe’s by inviting it to be the compassionate embrace that can surround and transform suffering.

Over the past year, I have been both a recipient and a provider of hospitality in this home. While I know that housing is a great necessity among the people we serve, I believe that the need for a home is even greater. At its best, St. Joe’s touches that need for guests and workers alike. I am convinced that even without the meal or the

socks or the bus passes, or maybe even if all of our guests had housing of their own, St. Joe’s would not be empty. Because what we can offer is greater than the warmest pair of socks or the tastiest meal or the most advanced television.

The enchanting idea that I find at the heart of the Catholic Worker is the confidence that we are enough as we are. We don’t have to be housing specialists to create a home, or counselors to lead someone toward healing. Within each of us dwells the compassion that can call forth beauty from suffering, and the more we cultivate that compassion and the more honest we are about our suffering, the more beautiful our world can be. The bounty of gifts available to St. Joe’s, both financial and material, furnish our house, but it stands on the time, energy, love, commitment, and the consistent return of the people who call it home. ☞

Hancock 38 Update by Harry Murray

The trials of the Hancock 38 are over, I think; drone murders continue, I know. The final appearance for the Hancock 38 Anti-Drone action occurred on Leap Day, nearly a year after the die-in before the gates of Hancock Air National Guard Base on April 22, 2011.

Kathy Kelly, Martha Hennessey, Ann Wright, Elliott Adams, and Jules Orkin all spoke eloquently before their sentencing. Kathy, who had just returned from Kabul, spoke movingly of Fazillah, a 25-year-old Afghan widow whose husband was killed in a drone strike in July 2007, while he was sitting in a garden with four other men, none of whom were combatants. Fazillah has been left to raise her son alone.

Martha conveyed messages from members of the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers with whom a number of the defendants had Skyped the previous evening. They asked her to ask the judge if he had ever heard the sounds of drones and what would he do if he heard drones hovering over his home? Ann told of her decades of experience in the military and the State Department and Judge Gideon engaged her in conversation about her professional views on the drones.

Elliott told Judge Gideon that his community service was doing what the courts have failed to do—calling attention to war crimes and trying to stop war crimes. Finally, Jules addressed the fact that the British courts allow for much more freedom of dissent than do U.S. courts. All were given the same sentence—a



Some of the Hancock 38 at a press conference after Feb. 29, 2012, trial. Photo courtesy of Jim Commentucci, Syracuse Post-Standard, www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2012/02/five_last_drone_protesters_sen.html

one year conditional discharge, \$250 fine, and \$125 surcharge—despite the fact that each stated that s/he would not pay a fine.

After sentencing the five, Judge Gideon declared court adjourned, which caused a great deal of confusion for around 20 defendants who had believed that we were required to appear this night to explain why we had not paid fines or documented community service. Judge Gideon stated that he had not yet received any notice of delinquency in paying the fines (which were due that day) and that if he received such notice he would issue a civil judgment against us, which could affect our credit rating. It remained unclear whether jail time might still be a possibility for those who had failed to meet the community service requirement. With that, court was over.

Judge Gideon did state that since our last court appearance, there has been extensive public discussion,

not of the trial, but of the issues we had raised concerning the drones and stated, approvingly, that we had therefore accomplished our purpose. But, he noted, there was still a cost to be paid for that accomplishment, and his job was to impose that cost. There has, indeed, been some encouraging news. A recent editorial in the *Syracuse Post-Standard* called for an international ban on drones, something I had called for at our trial.

Most of us gathered at The Metro on Westcott Street afterwards to share food and drink and plan for further resistance against the drones. An action is being planned for Earth Day, April 22, at Hancock Air Base. We invite you to join us to protest the illegal killings and the conversion of Upstate New York into a war zone. Feel free to email me at hmurray9@naz.edu for updated information. ☞

Sue and George

by *Tim Sigrist*

There was a team here; a force to behold. For now...one stays behind...doing the mop up: another newsletter, another trip to Foodlink, a finance meeting, a check written to help a person with rent.

One life (fully) lived...another marches on.

Who will write the thank you notes, fold the newsletters, take the messages? Rachael "gets it" and has accepted the baton. Sue and the girls finished the Holiday giving pile, cleaned up any loose ends, and clarified instructions. George met with Rachael. She steps into some pretty big shoes.

He goes home to an empty, quiet house, rudderless, yet guided still...somehow; rich memories. That pair opened their home for many community dinners: Sue, warmly inviting, always staying above the fray...steady, anchoring; a long anchor line, at that...for George. We always knew that Sue held family, as a value, above everything else. When George was missing at the "house" we knew he and Sue were babysitting in either Baltimore or Maine with a side trip to Vermont...and, in any weather.

When he left a drag-on meeting, we knew dinner was on the table; Sue was waiting. She came from a big family and wanted even more than the six girls she was gifted. And those girls have been enriched by Sue's always keeping "family"

tantamount: the cousin's party, open house at the beach rental, ski trips...all aboard! Cap'n Sue at the helm! All the girls were at her side during those last days, assuring her that McVey family traditions were not passing!

And when Sue came to a Worker gathering, the whole house was elevated. A speaker comes from a western desert, claiming to live off pebbles and cactus. Sue would show her support and instantly give the event the family seal of approval.

She never meddled. She was a constant lover for George and a constant model for all of us: family first...and then extended, unconditionally, to all of us...to everyone. 



George and Sue McVey



Suzanne Martin McVey

1939-2012

Coop, R.I.P.
by Harry Murray

Last November, we lost Galen Cooper, sixty years old, a long-time friend of the House, who died of cancer of the throat, after years of health complaints but a relatively short time after getting a terminal cancer diagnosis.

Coop exemplified the ideals of the Catholic Worker. He was a gentle person, long suffering, and kind. On those occasions when he had a room of his own—thanks primarily to tireless advocacy work by Tim Sigrist—he would inevitably invite some of his homeless friends in to share his quarters. Unfortunately, this, also inevitably, led to drunken parties and his eviction.

Tim solved this only by getting him a room at Elk Place, where there is a guard at the door and visitors have to pay \$5—an arrangement that benefited Coop in the long run.

Coop had been a part of the House for as long as I remember. Much of his life is a mystery. He repeatedly told us of his time as a soldier in Vietnam,



Galen Cooper
 1951-2011

yet we could find no record in the VA of his ever having served and his brother said he was never in the military. He had three children, but they had lost contact with him over the years.

Tim's reflection on his working with Coop was, as usual, profound. He said that for years he thought that Coop was just recalcitrant, just refused to cooperate out of sheer cussedness. But as he worked with him, he came to realize that Coop was incapable of remembering appointments—even if reminded four or five times. Tim would show up at his room for an appointment and Coop would usually ask him, "What are you doing here?" genuinely having forgotten that he had been reminded numerous times about his appointment.

Coop and St. Joe's had a long history. At many points we failed him, but, thanks to Tim, we did come through for him in his final years. I will be looking forward to having a celestial beer with

Coop when I pass on. There are still quite a few mysteries I'd like to explore with him. ☚



Divine Master,

*grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
 to be understood, as to understand;
 to be loved, as to love.*

For it is in giving that we receive.

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
 and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.*

Amen.

—St. Francis of Assisi



Dealing with the System: An Unexpected Ministry by Rev. Chava Redonnet

This past summer, St. Romero's began celebrating Mass once a week with a group of migrant farm workers west of the city. Each Thursday night in the summer and fall we celebrated together, first standing in a parking lot outside of their small house, then, thankfully as the weather grew colder, indoors when they moved to a larger house. This ministry with all its joy and laughter took an unexpected turn in September when two men from the community were picked up by

immigration and detained. We were able to bond them out, and since then have been walking with them as they deal with the system.

"Dealing with the system" means reporting in to Buffalo every other week. Additionally, the guys must wait by the phone one night each week and respond within three minutes when they get called. This is instead of wearing a clunky GPS ankle bracelet and is made possible by donations to St. Romero's that pay for the land-line phone they need. There are also house visits, for which they must be at home.

Our friends work ten hours a day, six days a week, performing tasks the rest of us rely on for our daily food. For this they earn heartbreakingly little money, with no vacation or sick time, get housed in sub-human conditions, and on top of everything else, get in trouble for being here. Something is terribly wrong with this system.

Our guys will go up in front of the Homeland Security judge in April, 2013. We will walk with them, offering love and hope and doing what we can. In the summer we'll begin offering Mass again and see how this lovely ministry might grow. Keep us in your prayers, please. ✚

House Comings and Goings by Rev. Chava Redonnet

Our **Rachael** will be leaving us in April, after staying longer than she had originally planned, to our great blessing. She will be greatly missed. The good news is that she will be staying in Rochester. **Joe L.** is also leaving around the same time, also to our sadness, but also will be staying in the area. Both of these young people have made a difference for good, and it won't be the same without them!

We have welcomed two new people to the community. **Bobby** is settling in, and will be anchoring the kitchen two days a week, to **Peg's** joy. Bobby is originally from Virginia but came to us from California, where he worked with secular Franciscans in prison ministry as well as serving homeless and addicted people.

Rhonda is from Rochester and has been volunteering locally since 1995.



Bobby

Most recently she has been helping us daily and wants to become a Catholic Worker, she says. She loves doing hospitality and learning about the bakery. Two new applicants have come to check us out: **Marc** from Portland, Oregon, who has a strong CW background and **Chris** from Virginia. Both will go through a 4-week training cycle.

I, **Chava**, continue to offer Mass at Oscar Romero Church each Sunday morning at 11 a.m. in the dining room. Since November we have been

celebrating a bilingual Mass, combining the English and Spanish speaking versions of our church. The migrant ministry has become central to the work of St. Romero's, and your prayers would be appreciated as we discern our direction for the future.

Lastly, and sadly, we had two "goings" this winter that must be mentioned. The first was our old friend "Coop" (Galen Cooper), who passed in November. Around the same time, we learned that Sue McVey was ill. Her family gathered around her, and we kept her, George, and all of them in our prayers through the weeks that followed. All of us from St. Joe's came together with hundreds of others to say goodbye at her funeral at Spiritus Christi on February 2. Peg provided lunch afterwards, with much help from the community. We are richer for having known both Coop and Sue. Rest in peace, dear friends. ✚

a poem by Joe Lavoie

To the Southwedge Angels



"My Angel Modern Icon," painted by artist, Luiza Vizoli

Sharon, get up
it's 3 in the afternoon
pull that junk from your
arm and eat this damn ham sandwich

you're trembling
i wonder if it's the dope
or the manic nights under bridges
or the scar on your right cheek
with its twisted grin
but i'll never ask
just eat the damn sandwich, please?

Shannon, shriveled African beauty,
twisted teeth and cobweb eyeballs.
i'm snared i love you.
wanna hold
wanna stop your shaking
make you some mac n' cheese
sing you a lullaby and ask you about
your happiest memory.

but i can't. when i look into
your yellow eyes
rage boils out my skull melting

morality to sword,
my expression of aggression,
the last stand of a self-
proclaimed pacifist—the pen.
Mary, you make me wanna rain words
like batons
and alliterations like atom bombs
Mary, i'd literary kill a man for you
but when i look into those eyes
they've seen the flex-grunt horror show
they thirst

for another way...
for someone's hand to hold
for a steady voice
that says
put down that needle,
for someone to say
you are the beloved child of God,
you are beautiful
you look like an angel,
for someone to whisper in your ear
i love you
welcome home. ☞

Assisi Peace Walk June 2, 2012

St. Joseph's House will again participate in the Assisi Peace Walk. The walk will be a fundraiser for St. Joe's, contributing all the money to our Catholic Worker food program affiliate in Borgne, Haiti.

We have our connection to Borgne through community member Sarah Brownell Ahimsa, who has been working with the poor in Haiti for years. To support the Walk send a donation to St. Joe's. Write "Assisi Peace Walk" on your check.



CSA Memberships Available by Chris Phillips

St. Fiacre Microfarm is expanding its memberships. We have 10 available in the summer CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture). For more information and how to join, call Tim Braley, 585-310-2963.

St. Fiacre's follows Peter Maurin's "green revolution" social philosophy. We see our work on one hand as "hidden with Christ." On the other hand, we know this work overturns society from below, uprooting basic metaphors—profiteering overturned with generosity, competition converted with cooperation, self-individuation felled with self-emptying.

“May the road rise to meet you...”

May you take delight in knowing that **Bread for All**, St. Joe’s community-supported bakery, will again offer scrumptious Irish Soda Bread on Friday, March 16, from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.!

Peg Gefell’s great-grandmother’s recipe is our guide. Thank you, Johanna Murphy!

Our bakers and trainees from St. Joe’s, along with helpers from McQuaid—thank you one and all ahead of time—will gather the organic raisins, flours, and butter into a wonderful round loaf, scaled at a pound-plus.

Our Irish Soda Bread sells for \$6 or \$5 for our subscribers of our great whole wheat bread. Our subscribers are the backbone of the bakery. Now in our second year, we are grateful that we continue to grow. We have been blessed with energetic trainees. The pride and self-confidence displayed when a trainee attends a meal at St. Joe’s and beams as the announcement is made: “Today’s dessert comes from our bakery, Bread for All, and was made by Robert,”

is what we are about. **Bread for All** offers great whole wheat loaves for those who can afford to pay; loaves given to those who cannot afford a loaf; job training for those who seek work. Everyone eats. No one goes hungry. No one gets rich. It’s the Irish way.



Irish Soda Bread

\$6

*Ready for Pick-Up at St. Joe’s
Friday, March 16, 1:00-6:00 p.m.*

Call 775-9135

To Place an Order



Quinton Christmas: Up, Out, and Upward

They were an odd couple: Quinton...brooding, stand-offish; Mirabai...bubbly, fragile, a Worker. But they were connected here at St. Joe’s. It was a match only heaven could make. Mirabai saw something in Quinton early on, before the rest of us. She saw goodness: solid, compassionate.

He came in like the many: homeless and wary. He stayed, 9 at night to 7 every morning, in our shelter. We had a 2-month limit back then, but we extended it for Mirabai (and Quinton) because she had faith in him.

Slowly, and ever so quietly, his flower unfolded. Again, Mirabai stood by him asking that he move to the second floor and be given a key. She was asking

us to re-establish a program that had failed. She (with Quinton) would resurrect it. Somehow, her flower would grow the “second floor,” again; a phoenix!

And it did! Quinton got a part-time job at Tops, saved his money, supervised the shelter he passed through (for us). Eventually, he married his sweetheart, Pauline, holding his reception at the House. He still comes back to do shelter. And sometimes, he leaks out some of his story to our new Workers.

Oh, and Mirabai made the wedding cake!

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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Please let us know if you do not wish to receive our publication.

House Needs:

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

Calendar

April

6 Good Friday, Stations of the Cross
15 Shelter Closes
15 Pancake Breakfast for Haiti Program
18 Bike Repair Clinic Opens

May

1 Feast Day, St. Joseph the Worker
7-11 Closed for semi-annual maintenance/cleaning
28 Memorial Day Picnic

June

2 Assisi Peace Walk

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.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3-13 Rev. Stacy DeLoach | 5-8 No Service |
| 3-20 Chris Phillips | 5-15 Cathy Mrzywka |
| 3-27 Caroline Kristofferson | 5-22 Rev. Lawrence Hargrave |
| 4-3 Sr. Grace Miller | 5-29 Deacon Tom Cleary |
| 4-10 Donna Ecker | 6-5 Fr. Larry Tracy |
| 4-17 Tim McGowan | 6-12 Fr. Bob Werth |
| 4-24 Fr. Jim Callan | |
| 5-1 Deacon Bill Coffey | |