



Rochester Catholic Worker

Rochester, New York — Summer 2011

Syracuse Die-In Protest

by Harry Murray

A total of 37 persons, ranging in age from 17 to 91, were arrested at the die-in, which occurred on April 22, which was both Good Friday and Earth Day. Why would so many people submit to arrest at the beginning of a holiday weekend, even after the police announced that we would be held in jail until Easter Monday? Why would persons who needed assistance walking participate in a die-in?

The reason: because war has returned to upstate New York in a bizarre, high-tech manner. In 2008 the 174th Fighter Wing of the New York Air National Guard began to transition from piloted F-16s to MQ-9 Reapers, an updated version of the Predator drone. It flies faster and carries a heavier payload. Although controlled from Syracuse, the drones actually are launched from other countries. Drones have been used in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Libya, Mexico, and along the US-Canadian border, in some places just for surveillance, elsewhere also for killing.

In Pakistan alone, drones have killed 1,863 people through 2010. Although drones are supposed to be precision killers, many of their victims have been civilians. Discriminating between civilians and “legitimate targets”

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Arresting Gandhi

by Harry Murray

“You’re arresting Gandhi!” A woman’s voice boomed over the crowd, addressing a police officer who was escorting a handcuffed Kathy Kelly from the gate of the Hancock Air National Guard Base in Mattydale, New York. There was a great deal of truth in that claim—Kathy has been one of the major apostles of nonviolence of the past several decades.

Beginning as a volunteer with St. Francis House, a Chicago Catholic Worker in the 1970s, she went on to found Voices in the Wilderness, an organization that brought illegal medical aid to Iraq during the period of the Sanctions (the 1990s). She visited Iraq frequently and was in Baghdad when the United States invaded in 2003. She has made a number of visits to Afghanistan, speaking with victims of the U.S. war there. She has been arrested for nonviolent civil disobedience countless times.



However, Kathy was not the only arrestee who could be compared to Gandhi and certainly not the only representative of the Catholic Worker movement to be in handcuffs that day. Jerry Berrigan was arrested in his wheelchair. Jerry, age 91, is frail, but few match his patience and determination. He sat uncomplainingly for over an hour in the chilly weather until the

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Syracuse Die-In Protest (continued)

based on aerial surveillance is not a precise science. Even drones that are used only for surveillance pose a deadly threat because they can identify targets to be killed by manned aircraft.

Recently, the LA Times published a conversation of drone controllers at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada that resulted in U.S. helicopters targeting three SUVs that had stopped in the desert so their passengers could perform daily prayers. The conversation revealed the controllers searching for something that could be identified as a weapon and, then, upon discovering children in the crowd, convincing themselves on the basis of the aerial images that they might be old enough to be considered combatants.

Most were killed, including the children. None were combatants. As Ed Kinane of the Syracuse Peace Council puts it, "Drones are tactically smart but strategically stupid"—tactically smart because they allow the United States to kill without risk to U.S. soldiers; strategically stupid because killing by remote control has generated a righteous anger against the United States. As experienced by civilians on the ground, drones are terrorist weapons.

The die-in took place after a rally of some three to four hundred people, many of whom had walked or biked from Ithaca or Rochester. Kathy Kelly, Brian Terrell, Anne Wright, and Elliott Adams were the main speakers. In a departure from most rallies, the speakers led the die-in and were all arrested. All 37 were charged with disorderly conduct and obstruction of governmental administration.

Most of us were released that night (despite what the police had told us), although several of the out-of-towners were held in jail until they were bailed out. We've already had a second court appearance and are trying to arrange for a joint trial for the 37 of us, probably not until the Fall.

Plans are being made to hold a public tribunal to put the drones on trial during our own trial. We hope to use this trial to increase public awareness about the drones, and, in Rochester, to increase awareness about RIT's ongoing "drone improvement project." Please keep us in prayers.

✂

Arresting Gandhi (continued)

police loaded him into a police car to transport to court: they couldn't figure out how to get him into the bus that was used for most of those arrested.

Brian Terrell, a Catholic Worker from Iowa who has been with the movement since the days of Dorothy Day, had recently returned from Afghanistan. Martha Hennessey, a granddaughter of Dorothy Day, who had spoken at Nazareth College and St Joe's last year, was also one of those arrested. Paul Witt-Jung had, for a number of years, operated a truck known as the Catholic Worker on Wheels, from which he served hot breakfasts to those in the Oxford Inn, a major Syracuse homeless shelter, as well as serving coffee and cocoa to picket lines whenever a local strike was in progress.

Ellen Grady, widow of Peter DeMott and a member of the Ithaca Catholic Worker, had organized a peace walk from Ithaca to the base. Mark Carver, of Trumansburg, and a worker at St. Joseph's House in the 1970s and 1980s, was also arrested. Two of those arrested were from Rochester: myself and Judy Bello. ✂



Photos on this page courtesy of Gary Walts, Syracuse Post-Standard.

It Has Been A Good Time Here at St. Joe's

by Daniel Shneyer

I'm particularly grateful to the community for allowing for me to be a fully participating member while also respecting my need for religious difference for I am a practicing Jew, which has meant that I cannot participate in the Christian rituals at St. Joe's. Yet, I have felt safe here in my practice, and this reflects one of St Joe's greatest strengths: respect for philosophic or religious diversity.

I decided to try out the Catholic Worker movement after my plans to study Torah in Jerusalem last year were cancelled. In college, I attended a class that explored the life and ideas of Dorothy Day. I felt resonance with her faithfulness to the Catholic tradition in her pacifism and anarchism. I also believe (or struggle and need to believe) that it is possible to be a radical and sincere adherent to the Torah. I was also (and am still drawn) to the Catholic Worker approach to compassion to people in need, and, as per the Torah I feel that compassion to the needy is an absolutely necessary aspect of genuine religious life.

I have had many internal struggles about my capacity (or incapacity) to give and to connect to the godly image in others while working at St. Joe's. Too often, I have been in conflict with guests rather than in connection with them. So much of this is painfully rooted in not seeing others with benevolent eyes.




It has been hard to see the deeper truth and sincerity existing in a person who I *perceive* to be quarrelsome, demanding, manipulative, or dishonest. There is also a street culture of distrust that is lamentable. And thus I have learned, almost against my will, to think critically about many requests I receive. Frequently, when I receive a request I wonder if the person really needs the desired assistance, or if there is something else going on. This is one element that has hindered my ability to serve in such a way that helps me encounter the Tzelem Elohim, (Image of God), that is present in each person.

It seems that part of the challenge in the work of compassion is to put aside the truth to seek the truth of the truth, as Rabbi Noson of Breslov (d. 1844) teaches. He states that the truth can become an obstacle to the *emes l'amita*, (the true truth, God's merciful truth), and is the root of conflict (Burger 217, 219).

This is helpful to me with regard to the conflicts I have had with a

number of guests. I have used my truth as a "moral" shield from the exhaustion and hurt that are a result of the manipulation, deceit, and abuse that I perceive in hospitality work. But this preoccupation with truth has barred me from the true truth; in a deceitful, violent, or manipulative action exists a deeper experience of pain that cannot be communicated (I recall one of our community members, Rachael, made a similar point to me months ago). This true need, this fragility behind the deceit, seems to me to be an aspect of the Tzelem Elohim that I have often missed encountering in this work.

Besides these struggles, I have had meaningful experiences among friends in the community and among our guests. St. Joe's has been a place of joy and laughter, and of emotional support on those days when I have needed it. I have witnessed efforts toward peace-making and understanding that are a sign of the moral strength and durability of St. Joe's despite the quirky conflicts that arise. It may be something hard to find elsewhere. Thank you all at St. Joe's. 

A Force for Good

by Rev. Chava Redonnet

In April, Eli and I were in El Salvador with a group of people from around the country at the behest of Alex, a Baptist pastor and local organizer.

The most exciting thing for me on this trip was the encounter with others who are building alternative communities both here in the States and in El Salvador. There are many common threads: empowerment of women, working with the poor, ecumenism, inclusivity, equality. Over and over we heard about living like the early Christians, about going back to our roots as church.

The vision that binds us is so much stronger than our denominational differences. I believe God is doing something new in the world. A new church is being born: one where we focus on building the world God dreams of without worrying so much about our different theologies. Together we are loving God and working for justice and peace and life for all.

The Kingdom of God is among us! It is already here. It is in every place where the poor are loved and empowered, where all are encouraged to be the people they were meant to be without telling anyone they're the wrong race or gender or age or sexual orientation. We're living it! Imperfectly, with our shadow sides always there "but it's here, it's now, don't miss it!"



Eli and Chava


Before I came on this trip, I prayed that I might be shown the ways that I need to grow. That prayer was answered with a resounding "Yes!" as I came flat up against some prejudices that I didn't know I had. It would not have occurred to me that a former torturer could be an ally in the work of healing Santa Ana. Alex stretched my world with his embrace of every person as a friend and brother or sister. My companions on this journey stretched me, too.

One of the great gifts of this trip was the mix of people: two American Baptists, two Evangelical young men, and us two radical Catholics. I was forced to confront my prejudice about Evangelicals as being rigid in their spirituality and having a narrow theology—that prejudice got smashed to smithereens by these two, so eager



Eli and Alex

to explore all the riches of Christian spiritual traditions. It gives me great hope for the church, for all the God-lovers together. May we break down the walls and find friends on the other side.

Don't ever give up on anybody. I want to be like Alex—ready always to see good people—and—my brothers and sisters—in every person—ready to work together to heal the world. 

House Comings and Goings by Rev. Chava Redonnet

Eli and **Chava** spent a week in El Salvador in early April with a group called Cielo Azul (see article on p. 4). Each day held an adventure, but among the most moving was a visit to the Hospital of the Divine Providence in San Salvador, where Oscar Romero both lived and was killed. A nun who led the group on a tour invited each person to say in one word what Monseñor Romero meant to them.

Eli's word was "consistency," and Chava's was "solidarity." Others said, "love," "forgiveness," "commitment," "equality," "humility." Later the group was asked to stand around the altar where Romero died, and one by one to place their hands on the altar and say their word again. "That is *your* commitment," the sister said. A moment that all who were there will carry in their hearts.

In late April we gathered at **Tim's** house to say a sad and fond goodbye to **Eli**, who has now returned home to Grand Rapids, Michigan. **Dani** will have left by the time you read this, visiting family in Rockville, MD, before leaving for Israel and Yeshiva study, and we will miss his joyful, loving presence, and close contact with a practicing orthodox Jew. Luckily **Rachael** who has been doing an outstanding job coordinating our community bread program will be here until January! We have been so blessed by this trio of energetic dreamers.

In May we welcomed **Sheila**, a Florida lady who is exploring the possibility of a long-term commitment with us. We also had a

lengthy visit from **Jennifer** recently who will be back the end of June. We are expecting four college students for our 10-week summer intern program starting the end of May. We are expecting Joe Levoire back in early July after he takes some time off after graduating last month from the University of New Hampshire. Joe was in our first winter break intern program and his oral account of the program has been a mainstay of our website.

Felix, is the most recent addition to our second floor transition program. He stayed in our emergency shelter for a couple of months prior to its close in April. He became homeless last year when he lost all his identification papers. Felix was born in Cuba, and has been living in the United States for over 15 years. Felix has gotten a new immigration green card. Now that he is in our transition program, he wants to become a U.S. citizen. St. Joe's community has helped him complete his immigration papers to go along with the \$680 fee. He went out and earned the money from auto mechanic work and now is waiting to hear from immigration about his final requirements for citizenship. Once that is completed and Felix saves some money, he plans to move to Florida, near Miami where he has some friends.

We also have on the second floor, **Yu**, with his computer savviness and RIT background; **Vandy** with his growing sous-chef capabilities in our kitchen; and **Mark** with his remarkable heart surgery recovery now at the one-year mark continue to grace us with their presence and assistance in keeping the House on an even keel.

During Lent we had a series of Friday Fish Fries to raise funds for our **Joe**, who is threatened with deportation to Liberia. We are hoping to raise \$15,000 to pay for his lawyer, and are about a third of the way there. Please pray for Joe. If you are interested in contributing to his "defense fund," please send a check to St. Joe's and note on the memo line that it is for Joseph Moore. Many thanks to **Peg Gefell** and all who worked so hard on the fish fries!

On Good Friday the community joined with Pax Christi and the House of Mercy for our tenth annual Stations of the Cross through downtown, stopping at the Hall of Justice and many other places that impact the poor and marginalized in our city. **Harry's** written program that he updates each year brings specific examples to each stop.

Also on Good Friday, **Harry Murray** and 36 others were arrested at Hancock Air Base, outside Syracuse, protesting the operation of our drone program. Walkers from Buffalo, Rochester, and Ithaca converged there after a week-long trek. **Peg Gefell, Paul Frazier, Linda Condon, and Chava** joined the Syracuse-bound walkers for varying amounts of time, depending on stamina! We will keep you informed of ways to support Harry and the others as they face up to a year in jail for their action on Good Friday.

St. Romero's Church continues to meet in the dining room on Sunday mornings at 11 am. You are always welcome! Send us a note if you want to get the bulletin each week.



Greetings from St. Joe's Bakery

by Rachael Morlock

Spring has been an exciting time of change and growth for Bread for All.

We've been happy to welcome two new apprentices into our training program. Teresa and Glen have been conscientious bakers-in-training, baking bread, practicing kitchen math, working in the garden, and bringing vitality to the bakery.

Robert will soon be completing his 20-week apprenticeship and has been a consistently committed and energetic worker. Luckily for us, Robert will continue his involvement as the official Bread for All delivery man: don't be surprised to see Robert on his bike, taking a cartload of bread to our subscribers in the neighborhood!

Thanks to our diligent volunteers, the garden behind the bakery is coming to life. We recently made



Paul Frazier, left, and Peg Gefell, right, with intern Robert

Chive Dill bread featuring chives from the garden and look forward to putting our growing herbs and vegetables to good use in the bakery, either in herb breads or wholesome lunches for our trainees and volunteers.

We are still adding members to our CSB (Community-Supported Bakery) and continue group subscriptions with Downtown United Presbyterian Church, St. Monica's Church, and the First Unitarian Church of Rochester.

Beginning in June, we'll also be broadening our operation by offering specialty bread and baked goods at the South Wedge and West Side Farmers' Markets.

We are always excited to welcome more subscribers and are also looking for volunteers to help with the baking, gardening, or markets. If you are interested in learning more about Bread for All, please contact Rachael at 278-7780, or email st.joes.bakery@gmail.com.



In the News...

On Tuesday, May 31, Bread For All was showcased in a full-page article in the Living section of the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*. Read the article here:

www.democratandchronicle.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2011105310309



A Positive Outcome

by *Tim Sigrist*


There are a thousand examples of “a turn in fortune” over the year at St. Joe’s, but little of it gets shared, let alone heralded. So, I thought it might be a good time for some “good news”...

... in the person of Liberius Cannady. His is the kind of story that helps legitimize all the donations we get that are used to keep the place open seven days a week. When it’s open, fellows like Liberius come to the door. We sometimes focus our concern on a person who seems especially vulnerable.

His difficulty is mental. He doesn’t articulate in a way that his feelings and needs are understood. As a result, he is often misunderstood. Two summers ago, he waved his knife toward a person that he found bothersome. We had to relegate him to those who can only come to the door to get a bag lunch for a month.

We used this event to dig deeper into his life. He accesses a small weekly stipend and Medicaid, which he never uses. He was eligible for food stamps and lodging through SSI and wasn’t getting them because he couldn’t access the system. Catholic Family Service is his payee. He tried to live in shelters but often lived out of a sleeping bag. Liberius never asked for help. No one stepped forward.

We did, finally. Liberius now lives at Elk Place in downtown Rochester; he’s an exemplary tenant. He gets and spends his food stamps at World Wide News, nearby. He won’t see a doctor or seek therapy but, I believe, he’s reached a station in life that suits him fine.

He’s found friends at St. Joe’s, who won’t rip him off, and who understand him ... a bit. 

*Somewhere in your life
hope you might see
one starved person,
the look on her face
when the bread finally arrives
Hope you might have
baked it,
or bought it,
or even needed it yourself.
For that look on her face,
For your hands meeting hers
across a piece of bread,
You might be willing
to lose a lot,
or suffer a lot,
or die a little even.*

—adapted Daniel Berrigan



Daniel Berrigan, depicted above in woodcut by Robert McGovern (from 1992), turned 90 on May 9, 2011.

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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To Subscribe or To Volunteer

Call Rachael at 278-7780

Email st.joes.bakery@gmail.com

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.

6-7 Fr. Larry Tracy	7-26 Tim McGowan
6-14 Minister Joanne Kaiser	8-2 Fr. Jim Callan
6-21 Fr. John Firpo	8-9 Sr. Grace Miller
6-28 Donna Ecker	8-16 Deacon Bill Coffey
7-5 Rev. Lawrence Hargrave	8-23 Deacon Tom Cleary
7-12 Fr. Bill Spilly	8-30 Fr. Bob Wirth
7-19 Rev. Chava Redonnet	9-6 Rev. Chava Redonnet