



# Rochester Catholic Worker

Rochester, New York — Summer 2012

## Haiti Update

by Sarah Ahimsa

We truly appreciate everyone who volunteered, donated food, and attended our seventh annual Pancake Breakfast for Haiti! We raised \$900 at the breakfast and a similar amount through donations from the last newsletter, which will keep us functioning for three more months! Also, it was wonderful to see friends from different parts of our lives mingling and enjoying the huge plates of delicious pancakes, eggs, and sausage that Kevin and Ralph served up. Thanks to you, the food program has been running since the food crisis of 2008 (when the price of rice in Haiti tripled in a matter of months), feeding 50 elderly and disabled people twice a week with healthy, hearty, locally grown food and lots of love.

A few weeks ago, I received a call from Somane Augustama who is the organizer/purchaser for the food program in Haiti. She said that the elderly people who are part of the program would like it to have a name other than "Pwogram Manje--Food Program" which is not very creative. So this is a call to all of you out there who are gifted at naming things. Please help us find a name for the program! We'll need something that works well in both English and



*Meal time in Borgne*

Kreyol and is empowering to the participants. Maybe we can make up some T-shirts for the program's anniversary this fall. Somane also asked for a digital camera so that they can send pictures to show us how appreciative they are of the program. Does anyone have a used one they could donate?

It has been a difficult month in Borgne. April rains flooded the town and nearby fields. Some households lost all their furniture and belongings, and some farmers lost their entire planting. One person was killed. Oxfam GB has been working on an easement to divert the river

flow during heavy rains. Hopefully this will be completed before the rainy season next year. On a positive note, the streets of the town are being enlarged and paved with concrete. That should reduce the mud and dust immensely!

Tom and I will be participating in the Assisi Center's Walk for Peace on June 2 and will be raising more money for the food program. Last time I walked, I was pregnant, so this time should be a lot easier and maybe 18-month-old Nella can walk part of it on her own! ☘

## Stations of the Cross for Migrant Farm Workers

by Rev. Chava Redonnet

*Holy Week is intense for priests. On Good Friday I came home from work, worn out, and took a nap. It was after 5:00 p.m. when I woke up, and with a stomach-lumping dismay remembered that the folks in the migrant community started work half an hour before I did that morning, and had been working, bent over in the fields all day. They still had hours to go. Hours to go at that backbreaking work and no chance for a nap. I got out of bed and wrote this piece. Come, and together let us imagine walking the Stations of the Cross for Migrant Farm Workers.*

We would start at their damp and tiny house and notice the enormous jug of clean water that the guys filled at some source outside the house and carried in together because they don't trust the water from the tap to drink or cook with. We would notice the lack of privacy, the torn-up linoleum, the bare concrete floor in the bathroom, the shower orange with something that won't come off with hard scrubbing (I tried). We would repent that we accept such housing for our brothers and sisters.

Our second station would be only 200 feet from the house where two of the guys were stopped by immigration officers last week, four or five cars surrounding them when they pulled out of the driveway. Our men were allowed to leave because

they are already in the system and have court dates. We would pray for the men the ICE officers had expected to catch, that they are safe and well wherever they are, and we would repent of causing our sisters and brothers to live in fear.

Third, we would go to the bodega where our folks punch in at 7:30 a.m. and out at 7:30 p.m., and recognize how our government's removal of two of their number has made their already hard lives even harder. We would repent a system that sees such captures as accomplishments and does not count the human cost.

We would go to the fields, and for a while we would work. We would bend over, planting onions, until our muscles ached, and we would weep with recognition of the daily realities of our friends, the work that they do that puts food on our tables.

For our fifth station we would go to the migrant health clinic in Brockport and learn that medication that used to be available for free, now requires a social security number. We would repent the meanness of our government that would deny necessary medication to those without documents. We would repent our ignorance of the indignities faced by our sisters and brothers.

We would go to the Mexican grocery store and ask how often they routinely overcharge their customers, as I was overcharged when I was there. Are they profiting from the simplicity of people who would never think of challenging a receipt as I did? We would weep for

the vulnerability of our sisters and brothers, for the ease with which they are exploited.

Seventh, we would stop by Walmart, and repent of the economic systems that have the poor in our country buying products made by the exploited poor in other countries. We would question the systems that keep us all bound, and ask God for help in breaking out of them.

Our eighth station would take us to Buffalo, on the journey that those in the Alternatives to Detention System must take every second week. We would experience the humiliation of proving, yet again, that we are cooperating with the system that oppresses us, showing ID, answering questions, trying to communicate with officials who don't speak our language.

While in Buffalo we would stop by a school and grieve for our sisters and brothers who never received basic education, who live with the shame of their ignorance, and weep for the loss of human potential.

Tenth, we would go to immigration court. We would see the fear as people wait to hear their fate, feel the hearts pounding, the anxiety in the breath of each person as they wait to see the judge. We would repent our complicity in a system that excludes those who now try to do exactly what our own ancestors did, to come to the land of opportunity to find a better life.

For our eleventh station we would stop by the little store where the guys and I get coffee after checking in at the immigration office, and,

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like Jesus having his face wiped by Veronica, give thanks for the little moments of respite that give us the strength to go on.

Twelfth, we would go back to work, to be yelled at for missing time when we were in Buffalo. We would feel the powerlessness of workers with no recourse, no voice, no union, and no leverage. We would recommit ourselves to standing with workers, to justice for those who are excluded from labor laws, as are farm workers.

We would work again beside our brothers and sisters and listen to their stories. We would hear of separation from families, of funerals missed, of grandchildren never seen. We would repent of ever summing up the lives of other people with terms like "illegals" and ask for help in seeing the human face of every person.

Our fourteenth station would be at the grocery store. We would stand in the produce section and realize that every vegetable, every fruit, was planted and picked by human hands, most of them likely undocumented. We would repent our indifference, our blindness, and recognize the holiness of each person and of the work of his or her hands.

And at the last we would pray and ask, how do we turn this system around and create a way that is life-giving, respectful of human dignity and worth, where everyone has reasonable hours, opportunities for rest, a decent place to live, education and health care. How do we get our sisters and brothers down from the cross? ❧

## Christ and Food Justice

by *Jake Garanzini*

The greatest commandment in Christianity is to love God with our entire self and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. At first glance this seems to be asking two different things of us, but this is not so. Jesus tells us that by loving the least among us we love Him and by neglecting those in need we neglect Him. The greatest commandment asks us to love God for God's self, and one way this manifests itself is by loving others. This doesn't mean we cease to care about them as individuals and only value others as the vehicle of God present within them. No, we are being asked to see the beauty of each person and to love them as a unique creation of God too.

This means that we must strive to see those in need as unique people, not mouths to feed. We must strive to see Christ present in all people. We must respect their lives and treat them with true dignity. If we examine how our food and our agricultural systems relate to this we see they are insufficient. They, like us, are not perfect. Every day people throughout the world die from starvation and malnutrition. Those that are poorest often get the worst food. In the United States the cheapest and most accessible food is nearly always the unhealthiest. The food we give to our needy and to those in need throughout the world is often not as good as the food we are able to eat.

Global agricultural systems are not perfect, of course. Just as we are called to strive towards being like the Perfect, we must also seek to create a perfect social system. We cannot in good conscience accept things as flawed and leave them be. International food aid programs have numerous hurdles they must overcome. One continuous concern is distributing food as the people need it, not in a way that benefits local authorities. Food aid also becomes entangled in foreign policy interests and international politics. Complicating all this is the fact that nearly all food aid is doing some good. So the difficulty lies in responding to the greatest need, where the food will be able to do the most good for people. Not where our greatest political interests lie.

During the Vietnam War federal food aid was used to try and help with counter-insurgency campaigns in South Vietnam. After the war Congress tried to put measures in place that would prevent military interests from interfering in the future. In the 1980s food aid was sent to countries throughout Latin America but not to Nicaragua. Again international politics were interfering with food aid decisions, and the focus was not on helping people.

Issues such as this are one aspect of international food aid that must be constantly monitored. The original U.S. food aid program began during the Korean War as an attempt to stabilize domestic agricultural prices, not help people in need. The objective of these programs needs to be helping people stabilize their own

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## Christ and Food Justice *(continued)*

countries not to create dependent nations. A vast amount of U.S. food aid has been sent to Latin America; why are regions that export agricultural products in need of so much of our agricultural surplus?

Farmers in developing countries need to be able to compete against large international companies who export much of what they produce. International policies can help make this happen, so can buying our food from local and smaller farmers. The call for organic and local products that has been increasing over the past few years has helped create a market demand for a more just agricultural system. By consciously buying these products we help make that demand louder.

Our decisions at the grocery store are inevitably political in some way and have consequences whether we try to ignore them or not. We are not able to ignore these issues until they go away; ignoring them simply allows them to continue. We are directly responsible for helping those that are hungry in Rochester, or wherever we happen to live. Because the land of United States is capable of producing such an excess of food we are also forced to be concerned about the world's hungry. We have the ability to help and therefore it is our reasonability to see how we can help and then act on that.

My belief that I must try to help is routed in an idea the early Catholic

Workers were quite fond of: Personalism. Personalism can be understood as Christianity applied to one's interactions with society. It is the idea that each of us is responsible and accountable for each other. We cannot assume that others will take care of problems. We must see what our role is in helping solve a problem. The required response is different for each of us. Sometimes we are incapable of helping, but we must discover if that is true for ourselves and act accordingly. The other prominent aspect of Personalism is its call to see each person as an individual and to see global problems as issues that affect thousands of unique individuals, not masses of people. As Dorothy Day said "The masses don't matter, people do."

Because self-interest is the motivating factor in most economics and not meeting people's needs, there will be injustices in economics until they are based upon need and not greed. This is not likely to change any time soon, so we must constantly strive to reverse the wrongs that greed creates. If we are striving to love others this is clearly necessary. If we try to follow Jesus' example of selfless service and self-emptying love it becomes difficult to accept our brothers and sisters being wronged by the greed of another. ✠

## Bread for All

*by Paul Frazier*

Dorothy Day once said, "Beginnings are exciting."

For the record book, here's how Bread for All, the bakery project of St. Joe's, went into motion: One hot, sunny, July afternoon Tom Malthaner approached Peg Gefell and Paul Frazier in the parking lot at St. Joe's. In his own direct and simple way Tom asked: "Do you have any work for the guys?"

Coincidence upon coincidence (or: nothing happens by chance). Peg had recently started preparing meals at St. Joe's, setting aside her 30 years of catering as chef and owner of Savory Thyme. Her catering business was located in a small house a few blocks from St. Joe's on Mt. Hope near Hamilton, a house/office she purchased and her family designed into a catering space: kitchen, walk-in cooler, ovens, work bench, storage and workspace. Well now, since the catering business was closing up, and since both Peg and Paul knew how to bake bread, and since bread baking, done on a small scale, was indeed the work of human hands, and results in needed sustenance, that is to say, bread for the body, and since the history of the Worker movement revolved around baking bread by hand, both at the soup kitchens and at the farms. Well, now, creating a little bakery project for St. Joe's rolled down South Avenue like a foregone conclusion.

The rest is in the details.


Bread for All became the name as ideas turned to reality. The

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principles came next: have two trainees from the St. Joe's community work at bread baking; sell enough loaves on a subscription basis to pay for ingredients and utilities; and produce a healthy, hearty organic whole wheat loaf, giving away loaves to those who cannot afford a loaf. Catholic Worker principles at work: employment for the unemployed; a local economic model, close to the distributionist economic model embraced by Peter Maurin, Dorothy Day, and the Worker movement. Small-scale. The summarizing slogan: everyone eats, no one goes hungry, and no one gets rich.

Trainee stipends come from St. Joe's. Subscribers are mostly those who know and care about St. Joe's and stop by on Monday or Tuesday to pick up their fresh loaf. Volunteer bakers work alongside the trainees. We make a healthy dessert once a week for the daily meal for 100 at St. Joe's. We generate support for the bakery with seasonal sales of sweet potato and pumpkin pies and come March, Irish soda breads.

Churches have supported us with subscribers who receive their loaves early Sunday morning after Mass. Robert, an early trainee, delivers fresh loaves to the South Wedge neighborhood by bicycle!

Come meet us this summer at the South Wedge Farmer's Market on Thursday at Boulder Coffee House – Alexander and Clinton. Find us on Tuesday afternoons at St. Monica's parking lot farmers market. Call to become a subscriber for our fall 2012 subscriptions. Catholic Workers at work! 775-9135. 

## Droning Out Free Speech

by *Harry Murray*

On April 22, I joined nearly one hundred others to once again confront the deadly reality of the drone control center at Hancock Air National Guard Base near Syracuse, New York. This year, I was not planning to risk arrest because I was too drained by the nearly year-long series of court appearances from our arrests the previous April 22 (as well as coordinating the Saturday meal at St. Joe's and chairing my department at Nazareth College). Dozens of us met at a local intersection and began to walk single-file, along the side of the road, the roughly two miles to Hancock. A number of people (not myself) were planning on risking arrest at Hancock by trying to deliver a second indictment for war crimes to the base. I was one of three persons who carried an enormous puppet representing an Afghan woman. Most others had signs. Except for two small drums, we walked in silence. Shortly after we crossed the Dewitt town line, sheriff's deputies and police ordered us to stop and informed us that we were "parading without a permit."

In the initial confusion, a number of people were arrested, including several whom I knew had not planned on doing any civil disobedience. The police herded the rest of us into a parking lot across the street. When several people tried to return to our starting point, police stopped them and said we were all going to be arrested and that they

would be given an additional charge of resisting arrest if they tried to leave. Eventually, under the guidance of Paul Frazier, we negotiated an arrangement whereby those who wanted to could leave their signs and return the way they came. The sheriff announced that those who wanted to "get publicity" could walk over to the police cars and get arrested.

Although I did not desire "publicity" (and certainly got none from Rochester's corporate media), I walked over to the police cars and stood there for about fifteen minutes. I noticed Paul Frazier being arrested and finally, with another person, I walked up to a cop and asked "What do you have to do to get arrested here?" He responded "Do you want to get arrested?" When I said yes, he asked for our driver's licenses and cuffed us. We were taken to his police car, where he wrote out appearance tickets and then drove us back to the starting point and released us.

Thirty-three people were arrested that Earth Day, most of them without having planned civil disobedience. I chose to be arrested spontaneously, primarily because I was appalled at the violation of basic Constitutional rights: to free speech, to assembly, and to petition one's government for the redress of grievances. I have taken part in hundreds of demonstrations in which we march on the sidewalk or along the side of the road without a permit. I understand that, in America, local governments can require permits for parades which interfere with traffic, but it was

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## Droning Out Free Speech *(continued)*

explained to us that the Dewitt ordinance allows police near total discretion on what constitutes a parade: presumably two people walking down the street with signs would need a permit. Every Good Friday, St. Joe's, House of Mercy, and Pax Christi reenact a public Stations of the Cross in downtown Rochester, doing exactly the kind of "parade" that got us arrested in Dewitt.

Things were so bad that even the lawyer who had represented many of us in last year's Hancock 38 trial, Ron VonNorstrand, was arrested for standing on ground where anti-drone demonstrators had been standing for nearly two years without a permit. If even an experienced lawyer can't figure out a safe place to stand at a

demonstration, America is in serious danger of becoming a police state.

Perhaps the most insidious aspect to this incident was that the police practice of arresting people who had not planned to risk arrest and threatening to arrest everyone involved (including a majority who had had no thought of risking arrest because they thought that what they were doing was, as it has been in years past, an exercise of one's constitutional rights and of one's duty as a citizen) has a potentially chilling effect on free speech and democracy. How many citizens who oppose war and oppose drones will hesitate before attending an antiwar rally if they aren't sure that they won't be arrested without intending to risk civil

disobedience? When this incident is combined with what has occurred at other anti-drone demonstrations, including the one at Whiteman Air Force Base the week previously and the arrest of Dick Keough and Ed Kinane at a later demonstration at Hancock, I fear that American principles are rapidly eroding in the face of homeland security.

Initial appearances in court have been spread out. Paul Frazier has already had his. Mine is scheduled for June 13 at 5:00 p.m. in Dewitt Town Court. A second appearance for many will be June 14. I plan to plead not guilty "unless I have been transported to Iran or Saudi Arabia or North Korea." Please keep us and our country in your prayers. ☩

## House Comings and Goings

by Rev. Chava Redonnet

Chava continues to celebrate Mass at Oscar Romero Church in the dining room of St. Joe's on Sundays at 11:00 a.m. It is increasingly a church of the streets, and one never knows who will show up or where the after-homily conversation will go! All are welcome, any Sunday. The Spanish-speaking iteration of St. Romero's will begin celebrating Mass again on Thursday nights at 8:00 p.m. once folks are done with planting. Right now they are working until 8:00 p.m. and are too tired for Mass. You're welcome to join us for *la misa*, as well.

We welcome five new members: Austin Retzlaff, Vanessa Trotter, Jake Garanzini, Jose Gonzales, and Marc Leonard. **Vanessa** is a Rochester local and dedicates her time in the kitchen, while **Austin** hails all the way from Brighton, N.Y., and spends his time in hospitality. **Jose**, from New Jersey, is at the bakery and working with our transitional guests. **Jake** comes to us after two years at Saint Francis House Catholic Worker in Columbia, Missouri, and divides his time between hospitality and Saint Fiacre Garden. St. Joe's is **Marc's** fourth Catholic Worker. He is most recently from Portland, Oregon, and is working in hospitality. ☩



Vanessa



Austin



Jose



Jake



Marc

## Musings

by Marc Leonard

As of this writing, in May, spring has finally actually come, the lion and the lamb have lain down with one another after an odd and prolonged dance. March was the hottest on record, and April unseasonably cool. "You can get all four seasons in a day in Rochester," said James W. to me one day in hospitality, laughing and wiping his hands on a dish towel. Outside, snowflakes were drifting down, it had been sunny and near 60 degrees that morning.

Time went on, of course, and things *did* eventually warm, days after we closed winter shelter. Some folks got apartments and moved out of the park, and other folks stayed where they were. One fellow's been taking shelter of late in the Port-A-John adjacent to the parking lot, where, alas, he serenades his demons with much screaming. Our rooms on the third floor are far more posh than that of course (voluntary poverty is a relative term), ascetic only for those accustomed to their own houses or apartments. Are we in solidarity with the poor? Yes, we absolutely are, even if we aren't out attempting to sleep in the wind and rain. Or, you know, the toilet.

Weather aside, it's hard on the street, I heard this week two stories of violence: men sleeping outside, attacked by groups of strangers. As workers can talk over one another at meetings, or make acrimonious comments about one another anytime. but we

aren't in fear of one another, and that also lifts us from the status of the unhoused.

We are well housed, as it is, even if there seems to be nothing but carbohydrates in the upstairs refrigerator. We're all thankful for the hospitality we receive, and we're thankful for one another.

I admire my new communitarians. There are nine of us here now. I think back on all the other Catholic Worker folks I've known over the years, some of whom are famous, others not. Those who are the sole *hospitallers* of the Catholic Worker movement do not often make news. They can be forgotten in the absence of overt forms of active resistance (there's really nothing newsworthy about helping out the guests or cleaning the toilets). Prayers and thanks are due for all the Catholic Workers whose names will only really be known in their neighborhoods, but who are arguably the heart of it all. Well done, all of you.

Anyway, back here in Rochester, with the gracious help of Tim Cardot at Exelis, a legion of volunteers, and our very own dedicated workers, the hospitality room has been painted and a counter installed, the kitchen has been rearranged, the backyard has been landscaped, necessary floor work has been accomplished, and we're talking about an outside shade structure for the summer months, that doesn't facilitate misdemeanors of any sort.

Otherwise, life goes on. We've been spending more than we've

raised, and have decided to go forward as a public stock option – no no, I jest, but we do need help, as always. I'd contend that our generous readers get more real return for their hard-earned dollars at St. Joe's than their investment in, say, Facebook or Kodak. An investment in Insitu might bring better stock options for drone warfare and fewer socks for the unhoused of Rochester, but we don't encourage that, rather the inverse: socks instead of stocks, so to speak, please. For those of you in town, we also implore a look at our "house needs" list, and if there's any way you could manage to support us with some of those material items, we'd be very thankful. We really do need the help.

May peace and the joy of summer be with you all. ☪

### Volunteer Needed

Do you love working with computers?

Prepare the layout for the quarterly newsletter.



Email:  
cathwork@frontiernet.net

Call: 232-3262

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.*

St. Joseph's House of Hospitality  
P.O. Box 31049  
Rochester, NY 14603  
585-232-3262  
cathwork@frontiernet.net  
[www.saintjoeshouse.org](http://www.saintjoeshouse.org)

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**House Needs:**

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

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**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.*

6-19	Fr. Richard Brickler	8-7	Joanne Kaiser
6-26	Fr. Larry Tracy	8-14	Sr. Grace Miller
7-3	Ministers Michelle Abant & David Hanks	8-21	Donna Ecker
7-10	Minister Stacy De Loach	8-28	Mark Potter
7-17	Tim Mc Gowan	9-4	Deacon Bill Coffee
7-24	Pastor Felton	9-11	Kathy Mrzywka
7-31	Caroline Kristoffersen	9-18	Elder Charles Morgan
		9-25	Deacon Tom Cleary