

Fiftieth Anniversary Issue



SPRING  
1983

"...a path from where we are to where we should be." --- Peter Maurin



**“LOVE IN PRACTICE IS A HARSH AND  
DREADFUL THING COMPARED TO LOVE  
IN DREAMS”**

# WHY THIS ISSUE ?



This issue coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Catholic Worker Movement in New York City on May 1, 1933. It is also the third in our trilogy of issues focusing on faith, hope, and love. The co-incidence couldn't be nicer: "Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams," was Dorothy's oft-repeated quotation from Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamozov. And the phrase, "harsh and dreadful love" has become inextricably associated in many people's minds with the Catholic Worker Movement.

We thought to spend a lot of this issue simply focusing on various aspects of the Catholic Worker, beginning with Jim Wallis' reflections on Dorothy Day and her meaning for our times. Anne and Bolen Carter's more personal reflections about Dorothy add a touch of "local color" to round out our sense of her impact on people.

Pat Coy shares his reflections on the peace-making facets of the Worker, which many people have indeed experienced as harsh and dreadful, if not downright scandalous. Mary Ann McGivern carries on the tradition of intense and hotly debated round table discussions for the clarification of thought, as she neatly compares the justifications for going to war under the just war theory to a woman's justification for choosing an abortion. Bill Miller offers a sensitive prose poem about fires and flames, and we include our communal letter to the American bishops on the third draft of their pastoral on war and peace.

In lieu of a unified photo essay, we've taken "our gang" type photographs of everyone in each of the three houses that we've placed by the news from each house. Fittingly enough, we begin the section of news of the houses with Virginia Druhe's reflections on the beginnings of the current St. Louis Catholic Worker and close with a farewell from Sue Lauritsen, the "first beginner" of the St. Louis Worker as we know it today.

It may well be that a practical, practiced and self-transcending love is our only salvation as we hear of the slaughter of the poor in Central America, the ever-more desperate plight of the poor in our own country, and a seemingly insane will to collective suicide on the part of the most powerful of the world's politicians. Now more than even fifty years ago, the harsh and dreadful love of the Catholic Worker--serving the poor as a matter of justice and holding uncompromisingly to pacifism as the Gospel mandate--seems the best news of the times.

## WE ARE NOT TAX EXEMPT

All gifts to the Catholic Worker go to a common fund which is used to meet the daily expenses of our work.

Gifts to our work are not tax-deductible. As a community, we have never sought tax-exempt status since we are convinced that justice and the works of mercy should be acts of conscience which come at a personal sacrifice, without governmental approval, regulation or reward. We believe it would be a misuse of our limited resources of time and personnel (as well as a violation of our understanding of the meaning of community) to create the organizational structure required, and to maintain the paper-work necessary for obtaining tax-deductible status. Also, since much of what we do might be considered "political," in the sense that we strive to question, challenge and confront our present society and many of its structures and values, some would deem us technically ineligible for tax-deductible, charitable status.

**Announcement:** "LIGHT INTO DARKNESS" non-violent civil disobedience action at General Dynamics Corporate Headquarters on Monday, May 23, at 11:30 a.m. Non-violent training sessions will be offered at the C.A.L.C. office at 3753 W. Pine Blvd. on Saturday, May 7 at 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 10 at 7:30 p.m. and Tuesday, May 17 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call 535-2252.

# LOVE IN PRACTICE

By Jim Wallis

The number of people touched by Dorothy Day is beyond counting. This evangelical boy from the Midwest was one.

I grew up being taught that the Bible should be taken literally. Dorothy Day is one of the few people I've ever met who actually did. She took the gospel at face value and based her life on it.

Dorothy did what Jesus said to do. She was the most thoroughly evangelical Christian of our time, though the movement by that name never claimed her as its own.

It was in the Depression year of 1933 that she and Peter Maurin founded The Catholic Worker. They sold the first copies of the newspaper on May Day for a penny each. "Read the Daily Worker," shouted the communists selling their paper to the unemployed in Washington Square. "Read the Catholic Worker daily," answered back a little band of Catholics who said their faith had made them radicals.

For half a century their paper has been the voice of a movement that has always concentrated on the basics of the gospel. Dorothy's grasp of her times was profound, but it was the simple things that captured her imagination and commitment--like the gospel being good news to the poor and the children of God living as peacemakers.

She always spoke of the "works of mercy" as the center of it all: feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, clothing the naked, comforting the lonely, sick, and imprisoned. For the cause of Christ, she literally spent her life on the side of the suffering and the afflicted, while relentlessly attacking the institutions and systems which lead to oppression and war.

In so doing she became an institution herself, and the Catholic Worker movement has served for fifty years as the heart and conscience of the American Catholic



church and, for that matter, of American Christianity. Dorothy helped to found more than forty houses of hospitality and a dozen farms which became rare places that the poor could call home.

The poorest of the poor were Dorothy's constituency. Shunned by everyone else, they knew they could trust this woman. Streams of poor people from her Bowery neighborhood showed up at her funeral, mingling with the famous and powerful, but knowing that Dorothy belonged to them.

The voluntary poverty, service to the poor, and radical pacifism of the Catholic Worker kept the movement small, but influenced many over the years. For most of the volunteers, life at the Catholic Worker became a kind of school, an intense training ground in compassion that would shape the rest of their lives.

Like any radicalism that endures, Dorothy's was rooted in very traditional soil. Her unswerving loyalty to the teachings and traditions of the church often caused consternation among her more progressive friends. But it was the strength of that very commitment to the gospel that made Dorothy such a radical. And it was this radical traditionalism that proved troublesome to the church she loved.

Jim Wallis, editor of Sojourners and pastor in the Washington, D.C. community of the same name, is a Catholic Worker co-heart. This article is excerpted from a book to be released in May by Abingdon Press entitled, Revive Us Again.

That same combination of conservative religion and radical politics is the energy behind Sojourners and has become a point of strong solidarity between ourselves and the Catholic Worker movement. Probably the nicest thing anyone ever said about us was when some of our Catholic Worker friends in New York called Sojourners a "Protestant Catholic Worker."

Time spent with Dorothy Day was for me a deep reminder of the simple things. It was a confirmation of the fact that love and compassion are the strongest things, the truest things, the most powerful things, the most revolutionary things.

The testimony of Dorothy reminds me that the Christian life begins with love, that it also ends with love, that there is nothing we can do as Christians, nothing we must become, that is prior to love. As we come to faith, we begin to love.

Sharing with those who cook the soup, make the beds, clean the floors, and care for the people at St. Joseph House and Maryhouse in New York brought to mind the words of the apostles. They suggested that love is the activity of faith, and that one who does not love does not know God.

In scripture, love has nothing to do with mere feeling, sentiment, or opinion. On the contrary, it consists of relationship and action. It is shaped by the quality of God's love for us. Dorothy seemed to understand that love is merely a reflection, a response to the way we are loved by Christ. To forget that is to fall victim to some idea of love in general, to some human emotion, and thus to derive our definition of Christian love from a false source.

The mark of God's love in us is the humility that comes of being crushed by the world's great need of love. The fact that we are overwhelmed by that continual claim upon our lives is a sign that the love of God is present within and among us.

To love, then, means to become what we already are--those who are loved by God. To love means a daily choice to live the life of faith and obedience. To love is to accept and confirm our calling, our vocation, our identity as God's people.

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ic significance.

Much has been said about Dorothy Day and much more will be said. But perhaps the most important thing I can say is that she showed me what it means to be a Christian. She was a follower of Jesus Christ who fell in love with his kingdom and made it come alive in the most wretched circumstances of men and women. Dorothy believed that, in the end, "love is the measure." The following postscript is from her autobiography, The Long Loneliness:

We were just sitting there talking when Peter Maurin came in.

We were just sitting there talking when lines of people began to form, saying, "We need bread." We could not say, "Go, be thou filled." If there were six small loaves and a few fishes, we had to divide them. There was always bread.

We were just sitting there talking and people moved in on us. Let those who can take it, take it. Some moved out and that made room for more. And somehow the walls expanded.

We were just sitting there talking and someone said, "Let's go live on a farm."

It was as casual as all that, I often think. It just came about. It just happened.

I found myself, a barren woman, the joyful mother of children. It is not easy always to be joyful, to keep in mind the duty of delight.

The most significant thing about The Catholic Worker is poverty, some say.

The most significant thing is community, others say. We are not alone anymore.

But the final word is love. At times it has been in the words of Father Zossima, a harsh and dreadful thing, and our very faith in love has been tried by fire.

We cannot love God unless we love each other. We know Him in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone anymore. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship.

We have all known the loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community.

It all happened while we sat there talking, and it is still going on.

The long pilgrimage of Dorothy Day still testifies to the same simple things with which she began: to refuse to kill, to serve the poor, to give one's life to compassion and love. She had been a loving adversary of every political regime under which she had lived. Hers was a radical position. It is such a position which ultimately has the greatest historic significance. Other responses--more moderate, most reasonable, more responsive to political reality--are always more tied to the culture, and will therefore die with it.

The influence of people like Dorothy Day always trickles in from outside the cultural mainstream. Yet it seems that lives like hers are the ones which affect the culture most, certainly more than those lives comfortably bordered by the values and structures of their society. She remained convinced that the way to build a new society is to build it in your own life, in the situation in which you find yourself. Her vision was a new society growing up within the shell of the old.

Dorothy Day died on Saturday night, November 29, 1980. She was eighty-three. Dorothy died in her room at Maryhouse, a place of hospitality she founded for homeless women on New York's Lower East Side.

I always thought I would go to her funeral. I met her only twice, but no one affected me like she did. I was on the road when I heard, and it was too late to get to the service.

The feeling of grief was overwhelming. She embodied everything I believe in. She, more than any other, made my faith seem real and possible to live. She took my most cherished visions and made them into realities. Now she was gone. It was like the end of an era.

Slowly, the grief gave way to gratitude. We were richly blessed to have had her among us, if only for a while. She was an ordinary woman whose faith caused her to do extraordinary things. The gospel caught fire in this woman and caused an explosion of love. We will miss her like a part of ourselves.

The doctors said that she died of heart failure. But Dorothy's heart never failed us.



*People are just beginning to realize how deep-seated the evil is. That is why we must be Catholic Radicals; we must get down to the roots. That is what radicalism is--the word means getting down to the roots.*

**Peter Maurin**

# Roots, Stems and Blossoms

By Anne and Bolen Carter

How does one begin to talk about Dorothy Day, especially when one's life has been touched and altered because of her? We speak personally only because our experiences reflect the impact she had on thousands of thousands of people - clergy, religious, lay, for these fifty years.

"It was a Christian revolution she was starting", wrote Father Dennis Geaney. "She was opening the minds of bishops, priests, seminarians and lay people to the fact that Christianity was not a sacristy affair. She was a trumpet, calling for all of us to find Christ in the bread lines, the jails, the tenant farmers, the migratory workers, the Negro. Here is a woman who has placed her stamp on American Catholicism. The seed she sowed in the thirties is bearing fruit a hundredfold in the fifties." And now it is the eighties and those words are still true!

She helped us to see more clearly how we could fulfill our mission to our neighbors. We read the paper; we listened to her when she came to see us at our small store-front Catholic Worker house on Franklin Avenue in the thirties. Old concepts were made new and rich through her vision: Works of mercy, corporal and spiritual. We all knew the words, but we didn't see the way for us. The words took on fresh meaning.

Liturgy - a new word for us. Dorothy said the Mass was not just the priest's action. We were meant to take a living part in it. We began to realize that the Eucharist fulfilled our need to become the Body of Christ.



ANNE and BOLEN CARTER were part of the Catholic Worker House on Franklin Avenue in St. Louis in the 1930's. They are faithful supporters in so many ways, not the least being the continuing inspiration their very lives provide.

Dorothy surprised us by saying she couldn't do what she was doing in New York if she didn't go to Mass every day and spend another hour in prayer. She challenged us to live the life of the Body of Christ all the time.



The Divine Office - that was new for us. She would tell us to get to know it and at least say Compline on meeting nights. Yes, chant it too. It was good chanting it together.

It is often said that great people open visions for us - show us the way, not to imitate them, but to become ourselves more fully. Dorothy was a visionary for us, but a practical, hardheaded one who acted on what she believed and helped us all to change our lives, to care about others, to take risks.

*mass every day and...  
another hour in prayer.*

After our Catholic Worker group in St. Louis broke up in the early 40's for a variety of reasons, the influence remained with all of us in different ways. For us in our marriage, we could not help but see that the poor people were still there and there was always someone who needed help.

Thank God today for the Catholic Worker houses in St. Louis. Dorothy's spirit lives there; in the workers who are committed to voluntary poverty, in the guests, and in the hundreds who, in one way or another, are helping our brothers and sisters in Christ.

# A Courageous and Peacemaking Love

By Pat Coy



The Sermon on the Mount has played a central role in the development of the Catholic Worker Movement. In many ways, the Catholic Worker vision of active love seems to be precisely what Christ had in mind as he turned the world upside down preaching that day on the hillside.

There are references to the Sermon on the Mount sprinkled liberally throughout Worker history. The personalism which marks Worker philosophy recognizes that Jesus was not preaching to a small group of select individuals who were especially gifted to hear and live out the Word. Jesus was rather preaching to a huge and diverse crowd. Still, he chose not to balance his statements; he refused to be cautious and water down his message; he did not worry about it being too hard to hear. He said simply, "Love your enemies." (Could there be a lesson here for the U.S. Catholic bishops as they gather to vote on a watered down version of their own war and peace pastoral?) And then, as if to heap fire on fire, Jesus summed up his message by daring them all to be perfect even as the Creator God in heaven is perfect (Mt. 5:48).

The personalist philosophy of Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day is built squarely upon the Beatitudes. Personalism does not expect change in and through social and political institutions, but rather looks for the creative and dynamic changes in individuals as they elevate the Christian precept of active love to a place of practiced primacy in their daily lives. And the one-person revolution espoused by Ammon Hennacy during his long years with the Worker is essentially an on-going exercise in Christian love.

The hitch in Christian love is that it is seldom convenient. It makes demands; it is a disrupter of lives. Love of God, self, and neighbor finds its truest expression in the love of the poor--love which more often than not must be delivered on their terms. Peter boiled this all down to the bare essentials when he said simply that the poor are "ambassadors of God."

To love God, to seek Christ in one's sisters and brothers, is to hate war and the Bomb. Dorothy understood the intimate relationship between violence and objectification; she saw war as the ultimate objectification of the human person. One can't and won't love an object. For both Dorothy and Ammon, war stood squarely in the path of the Sermon on the Mount's mandate to love actively and unconditionally--especially one's enemies (Mt 5:43-8).

And so we see throughout Worker history an attempt to balance and compliment the practice of the corporal works of mercy with a direct witness against violence and war. As we move toward the release of the pastoral on war and peace, and as we here in St. Louis step up our witness against General Dynamics' Trident and Cruise missile systems, we can perhaps learn much about where we should be going by looking back at where the Catholic Worker Movement has been these last fifty years.

The Worker commitment to peaceful means of conflict resolution was first enunciated vis-a-vis the Spanish "Civil" War. The paper refused to take sides and instead offered a series of critiques of the

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PAT COY, campus minister at St. Louis University, wrote his Master's Thesis on Ammon Hennacy. He has done a stellar job of keeping us connected with St. Louis University, almost weekly bringing groups of students eager and willing to help us out.



GOOD FRIDAY AT GENERAL DYNAMICS WORLD HEADQUARTERS. Catholic Workers include Pete, Virginia, Clare, Ellen, Mary Ann and Bill (seated); Ann, Mary, Teka and Barb (standing).

imperialistic motives fueling the war. This at a time when Catholics were, on the whole, vocally united behind Franco.

As World War II heated up, The Catholic Worker published a "peace edition" in June, 1940. In an editorial entitled "Our Stand," Dorothy stood solidly upon the ethical demands of the Sermon on the Mount and reaffirmed the Worker's commitment to pacifism. Throughout the war, the Worker echoed traditional church teachings in issuing a clarion call for the primacy of individual conscience--warning all who had ears to hear about the dangers of one's conscience being held hostage by the rising tides of militarism.

Most, of course, adamantly disagreed with this stand. There were defections even within the Worker ranks. The war years saw the number of hospitality houses drop from thirty-two to ten. In addition, over 100,000 subscriptions for the paper were cancelled. While not all of this is directly attributable to disagreements over the pacifism stance, there were many for whom love of enemy did not mean pacifism and non-violence. This was, nevertheless, one of the very few issues upon which Dorothy was to be dogmatic and doctrinaire, even asking houses to disassociate them-

selves from the movement if they could not accept pacifism.

When Ammon Hennacy left his "Life at Hard Labor" in the southwest and moved to the New York house in 1952, he lent an even more focused emphasis to the Worker peace witness. At a time when McCarthyism had a stranglehold on American tolerance and common sense, the peace witness of the Worker became markedly more vocal and visible. Again, there were many who disagreed, who wished fervently that an active love of the poor meant only providing hospital-

A typical letter, this one from a semi-narian, reasoned thusly:

. . .let pacifism ride for awhile  
 . . .We Catholics are already a minority and not overloved in America, without cutting ourselves off further and stopping the growth of Christ's Mystical Body by having us branded 'unAmerican'.

One can't help but wonder if this distorted reasoning doesn't still live today. Indeed, its spirit permeates the changes made in the third draft of the bishops' pastoral on war and peace, and especially rears its head in the sections of the pastoral that deal with Catholics in the military and the war industry.

Thanks for retrieving and legitimizing the Christian non-violent tradition for American Roman Catholicism go largely to the Worker movement. When presented with the clear evil of violence and objectification of the human person, the Worker reached to the heart of the gospel injunction to love and stood against the violent tides, often at great cost. An active love was necessarily fused with courage, the virtue Ammon believed to be the most important of all, for without it, one could not practice any of the others. The Worker witness was consistent and thoroughgoing. As Dorothy wrote in The Long Loneliness:

We had been pacifist in class war, race war, in the Ethiopian War, in the Spanish Civil War, all through World War II, as we are now during the Korean War.

There would be no compromise with the ultimate evil. A courageous, peace-seeking Christian love would not allow for it.

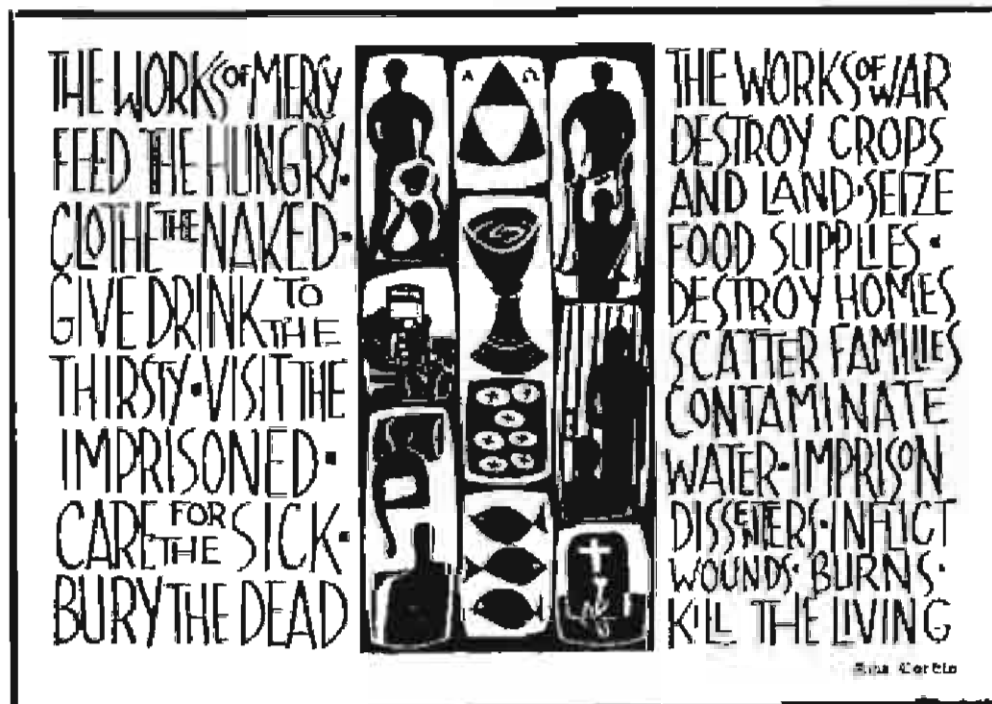
For those who are disappointed in the proposed pastoral's accommodation to the evil of nuclear deterrence, perhaps the historical and on-going witness of the Worker may be a place of refuge. In particular, the following example and vision of Ammon Hennacy's seems particularly apropos at this time.

In 1958 Hennacy travelled to Florida to protest the missiles housed at Cape Canaveral. The plan was to picket the Catholic churches in the area, attempting to prick the consciences of the faithful. One of the pastors angrily demanded that Hennacy remove the name "Catholic" from his sign because, as he saw it, Hennacy was giving Catholics a bad name and besides, he didn't have permission from the Bishop! Hennacy replied:

We are laity and we don't need permission from the Bishop or from you to oppose missiles for murder. The Church has had a bad name long enough supporting wars. I like the name Catholic and I am trying to make it mean something like the early Christians meant it to be when Christians could not go to court or kill in war. I venture that in the years to come the Church will be proud that we Catholic Workers opposed missiles and war and that we gave the Church a good name.

In response, we could perhaps repeat the Beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers. . ."

But as we stand on the brink, as the arms race is even now destroying those we try to serve lovingly, we can only cry with the Psalmist, "How long, oh Lord, how long must we wait?" And so we pray earnestly for that dawning day when the whole Church will have a good name in matters of peace. +



# OF FIRES AND FLAMES

by Bill Miller

There is some merit, to be sure,  
in trying to douse the fires around you,  
and even better, the nuclear conflagration!  
(Preventive planning would help here!)

Firefighting is an age-old need, trade,  
and the routine is well-known:

Receive the call  
Sound the alarm!  
Scurry to get ready  
Hasten to the fire  
Decide the best approach (if you have time)  
Spray with all you've got  
Worry about the smouldering timbers  
Report the damage  
Wonder about the cause (if possible,  
send specialist to investigate.)  
Return exhausted (hoping for a rest before the next call.)

Some folks groove and jive on the business of firefighting . . .

Yet for those who aren't self-chosen firefighters,  
the increase of firefighting  
often  
decreases the flame within.

Both fires have to be attended to;  
in the neglect of either one,  
someone may get burned.

But how to attend to one,  
without excluding the other?

One extreme leaves you burned-out, ashy, lifeless.  
The other extreme leaves you blind, deaf, dumb.

Just opinions, to help in sliding down the pole:

Q. What if you're just plain tired of putting out fires?  
A. You need a break, take one.

Q. What if you don't see any fires, have never thought of firefighting?  
A. You're hangin' around the wrong crowd, move.

Q. What if all you can see are the fires around you?  
A. Get glasses . . .  
You're in a hot spot, pray for rain.  
Ask a friend to show you something refreshing.

- Q. What if the flame within grabs all your interest?  
A. Check out what you're doing.  
Start a fire somewhere.

if none of the above helps,  
attend to the flame within.  
That flicker has got to grow and spread  
for any worthwhile and  
effective firefighting.

Think twice when they tell you that only you can prevent forest fires,  
because, in fact, they want you to put out their fires.  
Instead, nurse that flame  
and soon  
your time will come  
to fight fire with fire!

When all else fails or even if things  
are going better, spend time learning from  
Jesus,  
the great firefighter,  
the great firestarter:

"I came to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already  
kindled!" (Lk. 12:49)





## *the St. Louis Catholic Worker Community*

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April 22, 1983

Dear Bishop \_\_\_\_\_,\*

As followers of the Gospel who try to serve the poor lovingly, we believe Christ's injunction to love our enemy and lay down our sword should not be compromised because of the sinfulness of the world. In the face of such sinfulness, we must cry out the good news all the louder.

As Albert Camus said,

The world expects that Christians will speak out loud and clear, so that never a doubt, never the slightest doubt, could arise in the heart of the simplest person.

The world expects that Christians will get away from abstractions and confront the blood stained face which human history has taken on today.

The grouping we need is a grouping of men resolved to speak out clearly and to pay up personally.

Or, more bluntly: "I know all about you: how you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other, but since you are neither, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:15-16)

The third draft of the Pastoral identifies this time in human history as "A Moment of Crisis" because of nuclear arms. Please speak plainly. The draft as is presently worded is a spiritual signal for World War III. Put aside talk of "Comparative justice" and state clearly that we must halt the arms race--it is the only just act we can take in the face of the millions who are literally starving to death because of our misplaced priorities. We must lay down these awful instruments of death--not be seduced by them and their makers--Christ must be our only security.

True love of our country impels us to urge you to speak simply and courageously. We are going to spend the entire night of May 2 in vigil, praying that the Holy Spirit be with you in your deliberations.

Yours in Christ,

THE ST. LOUIS CATHOLIC WORKER COMMUNITY

\* (Ed. note: The above letter was sent to every U.S. Catholic bishop voting on the pastoral.)

# A Harsh and Dreadful Comparison

by Mary Ann McGivern, S.L.

I was the sort of high school student who asked the religion teacher long questions about hypothetical situations. (I have since paid for my sins by teaching students like me.) Students, though, may be correct in their instinct to push the issue hard.

Take the just war theory, for instance: I remember inventing a soldier who wanted to commit suicide and so volunteered to be the one to swim underwater to implant a bomb on the hull of an enemy ship. It was a given that the one who placed the bomb would not be able to get away quickly enough to avoid being killed by the bomb's explosion. The means in this imaginary situation, then, produced two ends:

- 1) the blowing up of the enemy ship which was at least theoretically good, and
- 2) the accomplishment of suicide, a clear evil. Was it morally okay for the soldier to volunteer to plant the bomb?

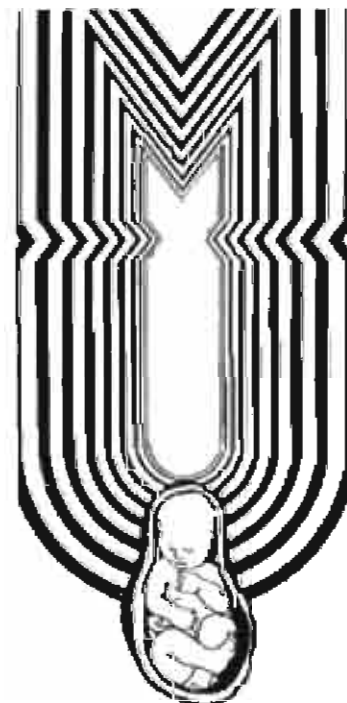
Twenty-five years later, I thank God that God alone judges. None of us have to measure the soldier's motives, probe his conscience, analyze the extent of his patriotism or the depth of his desire for death, or assign to him guilt or innocence.

Yet the just war theory does try to give guidelines for acting in this unjust world. And perhaps I'm still the same person I was in high school, because I recently found myself applying the rules for a just war to the cases of a few women who might choose abortions. Consider these three tragically difficult situations:

- 1.) This woman has a father and husband in prison. Her brother is wanted by the authorities, suspected of being a guerrilla. She is one month pregnant and is arrested, questioned about her family, not tortured but held in jail for one week.

The day the jailers release her she goes to her doctor, gets an abortion, and walks out of the country with what she can carry, becoming a refugee.

- 2.) This woman is twenty-five and has six children, two with lead-paint poisoning and one who was accidentally shot in the head through the window of their apartment in "The Projects." The wounded child needs a lot of care. The mother works part-time for \$3.00 an hour to make ends meet. (The below minimum wage job is illegal since she's on welfare and cannot risk losing it by reporting the extra income.) On a night she is very lonely, she gets pregnant by a manfriend she knows is irresponsible. She gets an abortion because she believes she cannot sustain the pregnancy or raise another child.



Mary Ann McGivern, S.L., lives at "the Little House." She takes Fleetwood for a daily run through the neighborhood, and then settles down to writing.

3.) The woman is seventeen and because she is pregnant her parents throw her out of the house. She spends a night at her pastor's house. But he doesn't have any ideas on how to get her through the next nine months, so she has an abortion.



The difference between these women and my imaginary soldier is that the women are a few real people I've known since I came to Karen House. Adoption wasn't a solution for them because it was the pregnancy itself they felt they could not bear. I am sorry about each of the situations, deeply conscious that human life was lost. And once again I am profoundly grateful that God alone judges.

But I do wonder how these situations would measure up against the just war theory, whose six criteria were reprinted in The Economist, (Feb. 6, 1983), in an article justifying "The Nuclear Christian":

1.) The just war must be waged by a legitimate authority.

First, in the case of the women, who is the legitimate authority? The Supreme Court? Do you think the Catholic Worker?

seen to me more legitimate authorities than military dictatorships, rebel guerrillas, or self-appointed "peace-keeping" nations that sell or give arms to one side or the other in various "local" wars. A pox on all of them.

2.) It must be in a just cause, proportional to the evils caused by the fighting.

Survival of a nation is generally considered a just cause. What about survival of the mother? Physically? Mentally? What about survival of the rest of the family? Can the right to a certain quality of life of family members outweigh the right to life of the unborn child? The parallel question is whether the right to a democratic, American-style quality of life gives the U.S. tacit permission to deny the right of Soviet citizens to live.

A front-page story carried by the St. Louis Globe Democrat on April 6 reported a random survey done in Massachusetts. Almost half the respondents "said they would prefer nuclear war to living under Communist rule. And a third of those polled still picked nuclear war even if it would mean death for everyone in the United States and many other nations."

I think we've lost our sense of proportion. I think the three women made moral choices at least as defensible as those made by half the state of Massachusetts. But then, not only do I object to abortion as a solution to problems, I also object to the U.S. building first strike capacity nuclear weapons in order to protect our national sovereignty.

3.) The war must be undertaken with the intention of achieving a just and lasting peace.

This is a contradiction in terms. No nation, indeed no person, can achieve justice by taking to arms, because the one who picks up a gun or chooses an abortion (or cheers a death sentence or pays the taxes that build the weapons) is changed. And if all these people are wrong, is the woman who acts out of personal desperation more or less wrong than the citizen who obeys the government? Again, why is it okay for a soldier to bear arms for glory or to see the world or to become a man?

4.) It should be a last resort, when all peaceful remedies are exhausted.

The women I have described are at war, with a system that victimizes the poor and victimizes women. I've never received a call at Karen House requesting shelter for a young man whose parents turned him out of the house because he got some woman pregnant. The homeless, penniless, pregnant woman is at her last resort. No doubt some abortions are for convenience, but I have not known women to tell of choosing them for reasons of convenience. It's been a last resort for the women I've known. I cannot say the same about any U.S. military intervention in Latin America since the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine.

5). It should have a reasonable expectation of success.

Here, alas, abortion fails the criterion. The fetus has no "fighting chance." Nuclear war, however, also utterly fails the criterion. Everyone agrees you can't win a nuclear war.

6.) It should be fought by morally legitimate methods; for instance, no indiscriminate killing of non-combatants . . . --like at Dresden, Hiroshima, Cambodia during the Christmas bombings, Massachusetts in the War To Come. Unborn babies are non-combatants, too. But who can say that injected saline solution is a more or less morally legitimate method of killing than a machine gun, poison gas, or radiation?

I oppose abortion to the same extent I oppose war: totally. I grieve that Christians have refused to condemn war, the arms race, arms sales, and weapons

manufacture because of a mistaken notion of justice. I grieve that Christians have not condemned slum landlords, usury, exorbitant profits, lack of food and health care. It is okay for a man to manufacture the F-18 or the cruise missile in order to support his family but not okay for a woman to have an abortion in order to better raise her family. Why don't we Christians worry about alienating women and the poor the same way we worry about alienating business, political, and military leaders?



# BACKWARD GLANCES

By Virginia Druhe

When people ask me how the Worker got started in St. Louis, I usually say, "Well, there was a woman at the Worker in Omaha who had very good friends in St. Louis. She wanted the best of both worlds, so she moved to St. Louis and started a Worker." The woman is Sue Lauritsen and it really was just about that simple. (See Sue's farewell letter later in this issue in the "From Cass House" section.) She moved here in December of '76. By January of '77, four of us had decided to move into the house--which, of course, we didn't have yet: Sue, Kathy Derby, Luanne Schinzel and myself. In retrospect, I can only be awed by God's ability to write fairly straight with four such crooked pencils; the houses opened and remain open more in spite of us than because of us. The St. Louis Worker is a continual testament to God's willingness to do the impossible for the sake of the poor.



There followed six months of orderly and genteel meetings with 60 or so of the finest people in the city attending. I couldn't really tell you what we did in all those meetings. We talked about neighborhoods, wrote some lovely goals, finally got a building, named the house. Naming the house took a whole meeting. Most importantly, the four of us agreed that community would be crucial to us in sustaining the work. That commitment--the decision to meet weekly to make decisions by consensus, to pray together, to share our money and our hearts as well as the work--has had much to do with our enduring at all and indeed, at times, enduring with great joy.

So on June 20th or so, we spent our first night. Four mattresses thrown on the floor of the only clean room in the house. We prayed Compline and fell into bed. (Such, at least, is my memory.) The summer months brought only goodness. Four more women moved in to help: Marilyn Roberson, Ann Mangano, Mary Ann McGivern and Jo Ann Silva. My overwhelming memory is of sunlight, smiles and hard work. Certainly hundreds of people showed up to help in some way. We plastered, painted, cleaned outters, patched the roof, patched the electric. (We learned to always give the cleaning jobs to nuns. They are awesome at it.) We moved furniture from all over the city in a bright orange 1946 International Harvester truck that had no headlight, no insurance and 2-year old plates--and that we had to push to start! We would drive the old shambles into the finest of neighborhoods, load it with couches and refrigerators and then push it a block to start it! When second gear went out and we were opening the hood at every stoplight to shift by hand, we finally put it to rest. But we enjoyed it thoroughly while it lasted.

VIRGINIA DRUHE, after getting Karen House on its feet entered on a vocation that is, as far as we know, unique in all the world: that of Catholic Worker hermit. Although she lends assistance to all three houses and with The Round Table, she spends a significant amount of time in solitude (and is an uncommonly sensible spiritual guide).

In September the Karen House finally opened. After that, my memories are few and blurred. They are of exhaustion, noise, dirt and anger. We had 70 people living in a house built for 30. The toilets couldn't take it. Nor could many of us. At one point there were forty kids: eight 2-year olds! At one time there were seven women over 8-months pregnant? Something like that. We were learning the hard way about welfare bureaucracy, the clinic system, jails, mental hospitals, de-tox--how to sense when someone is on drugs and what to do about it, how to quiet children, how to cook for seventy. We knew nothing. We learned what you can get for free: bread, donuts, paint, mattresses, canned good, clothes. And what you can't: milk, mops, detergent, lamps, toasters, dressers. We were learning about limits: ours and our guests. We went on pretty much like that for 2 years.

I have wondered what sustained us. Why did any of us stay? What was good in all that? My first thought was, "Well, there were the Sutton kids." Such fine kids. Such kind and courageous hearts they have: Paul, Eligha, Steve, and Sharon. They always smiled, always had a hug. And there was their mother, Helen, saying, "This is the best Christmas of my life."


There was Gloria and Cento. I have never seen such tender and total communication between two people as between that mother and child. Then she called one afternoon to say she was being sent to jail--would we come get

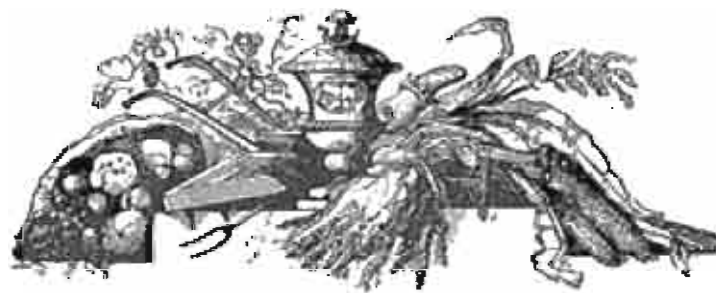
Cento? So 2-year old, very black Cento, became the new brother of 2-year old, very blond, Charlie. What a happy pair they were.

There was the courage and humor of many of our guests, the generosity of so many supporters. But mostly, I think--for me at least--it was the liturgies. Twice a week, at 9 o'clock at night, we finally sat down together. It was at least a little bit quiet, and we were fed. And the Gospel became so tangible, the Mystical Body so obvious in that context, that as impossible as it seemed to go on living like that, it seemed even more impossible to give it up.

I don't know that we've done all that well over the years. At times, I am angry at the disorganization, at times downcast to see people hurt by our ways--both guests who are so vulnerable and people who want to help us.

We have perhaps hurt more people than we have ever helped. At times I am scandalized by sin among us. We struggle often with our failures, but much more seriously, at times do not struggle with them.

Even at the worst times, though, I look at these people around me and a joy takes hold. "They love the poor;" I think, "by God, they really love the poor." It is more like the Gospel than anything I've known. I am deeply grateful for the life we are given here and for all who give it to us. "Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over." (Lk. 6:38). 



HERE IS THE BEGINNING AND END OF LIFE;

FAITH IS THE BEGINNING,

THE END IS LOVE.

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

# From Karen House by Mike McIntyre



BACK ROW: Mary Jane Antuna, Ellen Rehg,  
Teka Childress, Mary Dutcher, Mike McIntyre

MIDDLE ROW: Clare Bussjaeger, Pete Rick,  
Delores Krinski, Ann Manganaro, Joe Angert

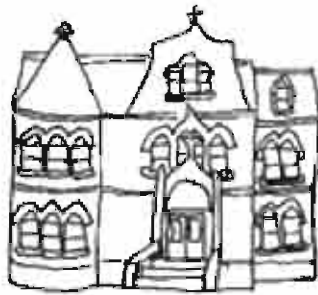
FRONT ROW: Tom Angert, Sharon Cummins,  
Lee Carter, Delores Gerchman

AT RIGHT: Alycia Green holding Myrrah  
Green.



Mary Dutcher, as is her wont, has decided that a new member of the community needs to write "From Karen House" for this issue. Copy was due April 1. It is now April 14, and Mary will be arriving by train at 10:45 tonite, expecting Round Table articles not only to be in, but typed and ready for lay-out. /Not true; I would have fainted from shock if such had been the case. Eds. note/

Well, the articles are nowhere near ready for lay-out, but it would be nice to have this written for her. Problem is, how do you find an organizing principle for the constant flux of this house--and not only the house but the active lives of the community beyond the confines of the house? After a couple of days of wondering, I decided that no such principle exists. But, luckily, I'm taking house tonite. So I'll try my hand at writing an article on the fly, hoping that it will catch some of the house's flavor.



It's seven o'clock, and things are surprisingly quiet for this time of night. Not that you can't hear conversations from the dining room or library, it's just that no one has run into the office in the past half hour with a real or apparent emergency. Phone's been quiet, too.

We've been a pretty stable group for the past month or so. Now it looks like we're in for a time of more rapid change, with a couple of guests leaving this past week, and several more due to leave before the month is out. These short term rhythms seem like they can change on you before you know it.

It occurs to me that writing this sort of article tends to force you to focus on the immediate. I shouldn't give the impression that we're merely reacting to the day-to-day environment of the house. Our community of Workers has expanded to 15 members with the additions of Lee Carter, Delores Krinski, Alycia Green and her daughter, Myrrah (at 2 months, our young-

est member). The walls are getting closer all the time, so we're thinking of expansion. A Karen House annex in the neighborhood, perhaps. In the longer term, perhaps a farm, or some sort of cottage industry. Maybe it's best to focus on the immediate, though. That's where our long-range plans germinate, after all.

A case in point: about a year ago, we realized that we had become a de facto semi-permanent residence for several guests. The obvious solution: put a time limit on guests stays so as to serve more people and to avoid guests' lives vegetating or degenerating by staying indefinitely in an indefinite situation. But then the problem: what about the people who just can't make it? And even those who can--aren't we just turning them out to the tender mercies of what Dorothy Day discreetly termed "this dirty, rotten system"? Of course, we can't resolve that dilemma in the abstract, but only as God gives us grace and wisdom each day. Lee, Delores, Alycia and Myrrah are with us because of our--hopefully grace-filled--discernment that joining our community was more in tune with the Gospel and Catholic Worker tradition than either facing the tender mercies of the system or living here as permanent guests.

There has occurred a long hiatus in the writing of this piece as I opened what looks like about four days worth of house mail, (which is to say, I've been neglecting to open it for the past few days). It's really amazing how many newsletters, newspapers, magazines, whatever, we get from other Worker houses. Everywhere from Winnipeg to Tucson.

We got produce from Raphael House tonite--Sharon and Clare are sorting through it in the food storage room. The coffee, some 14 hours old now, has finally boiled down to a drinkable state. (Delores and I are going to have to talk about the minimal strength of coffee.)

Well, so go the rhythms of a night "on house" at Karen House. Well, not really. Taking house isn't quite like anything else--but if you'd like to find out what it's really all about, give us a call and we'll arrange a first hand experience for you.

---

MIKE McINTYRE, Protestant in Residence at Karen House, prefers his coffee strong.

# From Little House

by Bill Miller



**STANDING:** Paul Sutton, Bill Miller, Tom Miravelli, Steve Sutton, Mary Ann McGivern, S.L.

**SITTING:** Sharon Sutton, Frances Annis, Lynn (B.J.) Steward, and Fleetwood.

Recently, Nathan, a four year old friend of mine, asked me where I lived. I wondered how to respond in a way that would make sense. What does "in the neighborhood" mean to a four year old? If I said, "One street over and three streets down", that would seem like a puzzle. "On the near North Side" wouldn't make any sense at all. Since he had once visited our house before I lived there, I decided on this answer: "I live at Fleetwood's house." That was enough -- he knew exactly where I meant.

Fleetwood is somewhat a typical Catholic Worker dog, if any such generalization could be made. He'll sleep almost anywhere, at anytime. He'll eat almost anything (again at anytime), but has definite opinions about what food is worth wagging his tail over. He has a casual disregard for clothing; it makes no difference whether it's a sock, mittens or handkerchief: he'll chew it up all the same. He has an unreserved love for all babies under two. He's a bit suspicious

of anyone wearing a uniform, (usually mail carriers and meter readers). He longs for the opportunity to get out of the house and, at times, would much prefer riding in the car to walking. He's somewhat opinionated about his turf; (some may call it a righteous sense of justice). Basically, he's happy to be alive and with friends, considering the nature of the times.

Sometimes I think we can best understand Fleetwood by seeing how he relates to the people at the house. One of Fleetwood's greatest thrills is his morning jog (or sniff'n pee) with Mary Ann. This is his chance to really stretch his legs, see the world, relieve himself of all the tensions of the previous day, and clear his head for the day's adventures (or misfortunes). Fleetwood and Mary Ann are often companions throughout the day, especially when the rest of the house is at school or work. From the couch in Mary Ann's office, Fleetwood keeps a cozy eye on her as she takes on the corporations, rewrites her play, hammers out correspondence on the typewriter, or handles

numerous situations over the phone, ranging from advising Ethiopian refugees to scheduling an appointment for Paul with his doctor. He keeps Mary Ann from getting too settled by his regular trips to the backyard--of course, she'll let him out and in!

Without a doubt, Fleetwood's greatest moment of the day comes when B.J. arrives home from work. It's as if he was waiting all day just to see her pull up in her little red car. Then, of course, he'll get to ride with her all the way around to the garage. What joy! Fleetwood has good reason for liking B.J. so much, because, in fact, she is the Great Provider. Often, on B.J.'s weekly trip to do the shopping, she stops at the meat department to see if the butcher has a bone suitable for her puppy. Besides bones and treats, B.J. really knows what makes Fleetwood happy, such as a game of fetch 'n tug or a good rub-down. She also knows what is good for Fleetwood, such as flea medicine or an occasional bath, though Fleetwood is not too keen on either. Fleetwood stays close to B.J. when she's in the kitchen. It doesn't matter whether she's cooking dinner, baking bread or showing one of us how to make lasagna; because at the end of it, Fleetwood knows there will be bowls to lick or scraps to finish off.

Of all of us, Paul has the best sense of proportionality concerning Fleetwood -- he knows there's a time to play and a time to be still. Sometimes, after a hard day at school or an arduous struggle at fixing up a car or repairing a bicycle, Paul comes home and Fleetwood knows that he has to rest a few minutes before being up for play. Paul has been through a lot of arrivals and seems to have a good sense about what they need. He knows when a good romping with Fleetwood is in order and when the dog should stop his yapping in deference to letting others be heard.

Sharon, Paul's sister, who recently became part of our community, seems to laugh the most with Fleetwood. She wrestles with him in the living room, plays tug-of-war with an old sock, and teaches him how to lick a gentle kiss on her nose. She, too, along with B.J. seems to have that knack for giving Fleetwood a good combing and scratching.

BASICALLY, he's happy to BE ALIVE and with FRIENDS, considering the NATURE of the TIMES.



Fleetwood shows his devotion to children in the way he sniffs and licks Darrell, Connie's baby boy. Connie and Darrell have temporarily moved into our apartment next door, and Fleetwood loves the new company and all the excitement. Connie loves to tease and play with Fleetwood and has learned that he will not hurt her baby, though sometimes his devotion to the little boy can be a bit too passionate. Fleetwood is beside himself during the evening hours when Connie and Darrell have come home from school, and everyone is gathered downstairs. So many interesting features and entertaining people!

We all are reminded of God's providential love and care as we approach the house and see Fleetwood perched up on a big chair looking out the window, eagerly awaiting our entry. It's sort of a folk version of St. Peter waiting at the pearly gates. However, the reader must be careful not to acquire too much of an angelic notion of our beloved dog. His midnight barkings, jealousy, indecent pokings, bossing, whining and pouting are, at times, hard to take. Oh dear puppy, you remind us that, as a community, if we find our height in celebration, our heart must be in forgiveness.

BILL MILLER, poet and writer, says, "Say that I wash dishes part-time." But his warmth and gentleness are more memorable aspects of his activity.

## From Cass House



BACK ROW: Zack Davisson, Willie Robinson, Eddie Ashton, Carol Donahue, Virginia Druhe, Mark McCarthy

MIDDLE ROW: Stephanie Ross, Bobbie Ross, Janet Gray McKennis, Barb Prosser, Catherine Ross, Kathy Barton, Audrey Tankins, Sue Lauritsen, Jeffrey Tankins.

FRONT ROW: Liz Ross, Trish Ross, Oliver Ross, Nodric Tankins, Crystal Tankins.

A

## Dream

## Revisited



By Sue Lauritsen

When I was approached several weeks ago to write some of my reflections about the St. Louis Catholic Worker, I was filled with gratitude and humility. It just so happens that in the last few months I've done little else but reflect and reminisce about the impact of the Catholic Worker Movement both on me and the hundreds of people it has touched - and let touch it - in the St. Louis area.

I am appreciative of the opportunity to revisit a dream of mine that had its roots in Omaha where I first became involved in the Catholic Worker Movement. I spent two growth-filled years at a Catholic Worker House in Omaha, at which time I decided to put out some feelers in the St. Louis area concerning a Catholic Worker House here.

In 1977 I moved to St. Louis with a dream of seeing a Catholic Worker House filled with the spirits of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin; and now in 1983 there are three St. Louis Catholic Worker Houses, two of which I was involved directly with in the beginning. When I first thought of a Catholic Worker House in St. Louis, I had thought it would probably involve overnight hospitality for men and a soupline because that's what I was familiar with in Omaha. Needless to say, that wasn't the way the Spirit was moving the people I came in contact with in St. Louis -- thus Karen House, a house of hospitality for women and children. The Catholic Worker dream in St. Louis expanded with the opening of Cass Catholic Worker House in 1979. Cass House began operating with a soupline added overnight hospitality for men and, finally, extended its hospitality in 1980 to temporary shelter for women and children.

In 1977 I never imagined how many hundreds of people in St. Louis would be touched by the Catholic Worker Movement. Some of us actually live in the houses, and a larger group volunteers the houses some of their time and energy on a regular basis in carry-in out the tasks that need to be done. This is an important part of Catholic Worker philosophy that Peter Maurin talked about, "bringing those who have to meet those who don't have."

Catholic Worker in St. Louis continues to touch people in all professions, religions, economic classes and political persuasions. The people in St. Louis were so ripe for the Catholic Worker Movement that all I did was act as a catalyst for a chain of events that hasn't stopped since 1977. For many in St. Louis, Catholic Worker has become the instrument they can use in order to touch the downtrodden in our city in a real way.

I've been with the Catholic Worker Movement for nine years, and it has become more a part of me than most people will ever realize. I have learned through some of my experiences that, as one who struggles to be caring, it is all too easy to strip people of their dignity by taking over the responsibility of making their decisions for them. I have realized it takes much more patience to keep affirming people's ability to take charge of their own life. It is so much more difficult to love people in their brokenness, whether it be those we share community with or our guests; and yet that is what the New Testament continues to call us to. I have come to understand that because of my limitations and brokenness my judgments are at times very limiting when it comes to being more tolerant of our guests and idealistic live-in members.

When I think back on Karen House and Cass House many people enter the picture; many are our guests who touched my life in a special way. I'll never think of Karen House without thinking about Hazel and how she tries everyone's patience-and yet there's something so wise about her. I think also of Eleanor Barkl and Nora Bell, God Rest Their Souls, who loved the Catholic Worker as much as we loved them. Although I've met many economically poor people through the Catholic Worker, they have been rich in spirit. Poverty began to take on a face with people like Paula, Jackie, Julius, Sam, Alice B., Zelma and Alice F. It is only when poverty is personalized and embraced that one will feel compelled to do anything about it.

In June I'll be leaving the St. Louis Catholic Worker Community to pursue my education in social work. I can't envision the emotional ties I have with the Catholic Worker not remaining a part of my life. The St. Louis Catholic Worker needs some new life, and I feel this is one way of facilitating that need. I am sure the philosophy of Catholic Worker will remain a part of me for years to come. The simple lifestyle characteristic of Catholic Worker will be essential for me as I move along.

SUE LAURITSEN, envisions and initiator of the present Catholic Worker in St. Louis, works at St. John's Mercy Hospital. Her contributions to the Worker movement in St. Louis will not be forgotten.

The Round Table is the quarterly journal of Catholic Worker life and thought in St. Louis. We welcome responses from our readers. The people working on this issue, in addition to the authors, are: Joe Angert, Pat Coy, Virginia Druhe, Mary Dutcher, Delores Krinski, Bill Miller, Barb Prosser, and Pete Rick.

St. Louis Catholic Worker News

## the ROUND TABLE

CASS HOUSE 1849 CASS AVE

KAREN HOUSE 1840 HOGAN

ELLA DIXON HOUSE 1540 N. 17TH

ST. LOUIS MO 63106

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I want to thank all those people who have shared their lives with me and who have let me share mine with them. It will be good to let go of the Catholic Worker so that it may continue to grow and be refreshed through the new and responsible people it will attract. Although there are a lot of people I could thank, I want to take this opportunity to voice my gratitude to three people I met through the Catholic Worker here in St. Louis. They have touched my life in a very profound way and continue to be witnesses of the Good News: Anne and Bolen Carter and F. Leo Weber, S.J.

Someone asked me the other day if I thought the Catholic Worker in the United States would die out. After giving it some thought, I responded by saying that I felt the Catholic Worker Movement wouldn't die out even though the two founders are dead. It seems to me the Catholic Worker Movement is founded on living out in a tangible way the Works of Mercy, and a movement founded on the Good News of the gospel will live in the hearts of Christians for years to come. Catholic Worker Houses may come and go, but the spirit of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin will live on.