Week By Week

The big event over the summer was the wedding of Jo Connolly and Paul del Junco. After a honeymoon of stopping at New England inns, they settled in Torrington, Ransh, Shandor, and Cy were wonderful antidotes to the "long, dry summer" with their enthusiastic and party presence. In the "welcome to the Haley Hotel Dept.," we had a steady stream of interesting visitors—Marjillene and Teresa from Holland, Pex Christi, Suchico from Japan, Margaret from Jamaica, Katrina from Sweden, Jennifer from the New York Catholic Worker, Sandy from the Catholic Worker Gardens of Hamlyn, West Virginia, and the charming brothers of Tres, Diane, and Jo. Diane and Deirdre were both affected with the travel bug again—Diane visited the Philippines in a delegation sponsored by Synapses, looking to make connections between the situation there and the one in El Salvador, where she had worked in a refugee camp. Deirdre headed west and left the driving to Greyhound for two weeks. Her trip included a very warm welcome from the San Diego Catholic Worker and a visit to the folks who have been holding a vigil at the Concord Naval Weapons Station since Brian Willson was hit by a munitions train carrying weapons destined for Central America, over a year ago. We said goodbye to Mike Fuentes, who returned home to California after his year of working with the LWV here in Boston. (Keep boycotting those grapes!) We celebrated our love for our favorite "little guy" Miguel and Dotty and Ilona in a baptismal ceremony in the soup kitchen. Godparents Joanne Viscoces and Jo Steele, godfather Brigid McKenna, and godmother Walter Williams participated in the ceremony. We congratulate James Brown and Mary Hunt on the birth of their son, Isaiah.

The rooming house at 575 Tremont St. welcomed Frank Alarie of seniors' meal fame as a new tenant. The house looks forward to a "face-lift" for its front facade. John Leary House welcomes Kitty Ryan as a new resident. She and Bob Wegener now have their office for their architectural firm, The Narrow Gate, on 23 Dartmouth St., first floor. Simone has taken up residence at 54 Montgomery St. until she departs for Maryknoll's lay missionary program in February. Congratulations to her on this exciting venture. John Leary House also welcomed John and Ana Wilson's new baby, Eleanor Rose.

In Alliantus/religion-related news, we held our third successful Peace Camp across from Draper Weapons Laboratory, ending with a "die-in" in the courtyard to dramatize the loss of life after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that we still face today. There were no arrests. On August 6, Joan Holladay, Pat Garrity, Sheila Parks, Carol Bellin, Deirdre Doran, and Vermont friend Mel Goertz brought peace cranes and signs to Ives AFB, a SAC air force base in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, which was the home to the squadron that dropped the atomic bombs on Japan. Jack Seery and Cornelia Sullivan spent some weeks studying at Maryknoll this summer in the liberation theology program. We spent a few days enjoying the challenging and stimulating message of Chad Meyers who shared his reflections on Mark's gospel. We welcomed back Michael, Maureen, and Aidan Casey from England and Ireland. They also brought back greetings from Amsterdam, where Eileen Lawler and friends are doing well in a new Catholic Worker community. We bid a sad farewell to Colin Kerhawy, Mary Beth Bradtke, and their new baby, Mayra, because they have moved on to East Lansing, Michigan. Alden Poole was arrested for passing out leaflets in the Draper Courtyard on November 14. His message concerned speculation that perhaps the peace movement can relax with recent developments like the BM treaty, but the fact remains that very little has changed in the still escalating arms race. Alden was scheduled for a bench trial on December 28.

The Farm Report . . .

Fall at the farm is busy and beautiful. Wood smoke curls up into the darkening sky. Noah, Luke, and Amber travel to the Waldorf school in Keene each day and return full of new songs, old legends, and lots of energy. Silas and Martin eat, grow, and along with Lisa and Claire sleep occasionally. The gardens are put to bed with food for the winter to nourish the soil. Jim traveled to Lesotho to help in food planning. Domingo and Manuel have made it to Canada. And 89 big beautiful chickens have made their way into the Haley House freezer. We have learned and grown through the summer's expansion. Now we ready ourselves for the turning inward of the winter cycle . . .
EXCERPTS FROM THE LOG

AWAY FOR US TO SHARE THE EXPERIENCE OF THE DAY-TO-DAY LIFE AT HALEY'S

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 1986

Elderly shift with Judith, Tricia and the following from Beaton: Hill Friends: Mary Bell, Carol, Krista — the Friends Group has downsize already saved the day on gravy preparation. Serviced beef stringbeans over rice with fresh peppers and tomato sauce. Only the vegetables better than he has in some time. Party was a success in a really good mood, made the first batch of coffee. Constantine apparently still angry ever-on.

FRONTLINE WITH JES - still hasn't shown up. John stopped by early in the shift but didn't stay for supper - seemed bothered by something. Mr. McCormick, still sporting a lovely straw hat gave me more just less lesson. He hasn't been everyday in the food lately and has been coming in before serving time to socialize a bit. Overall a good shift - Edye Michaels said we were 'very organized' — said we were like the Russian Ballet again.

Monday, September 29, 1986

Tony, Vince, Pete, Willie, Jim, Todd (Gina back, Todd). Talked with a young man named Christopher today... He came in wearing a stereo headphones, and putting the whistle to his mouth... Had a nice chat with him; he's a very gentle, observant fellow. Talked about SSJ, he's connected with Dorchester Mental Health Center. I felt sorry for him... the other guy made fun of him... Finished up and were walking outside the door at around 2:30 p.m. when I saw a lady coming from quite drunk, asking to eat when I realized they were quite abusive. It made me think of Dorothy Day's line: "People come to us in our wonderful work!" Lord, have mercy...

Saturday, November 11, 1986

Julie and Tom, Brian, Kay, John R, Vince, Hopki.
Julie was on again and prayer for help from the Lord. He brought in a whole parade of experienced hands and she glided through with a smile on her face. A sunny, cool day, many men, 4 sitings.

An outrun for the week: As Gordon was cooking Wednesday, elderly, a car with two young adults pulled up to ask if we wanted to buy some bread. We thought of the bakery and we ordered some supplies!

Tuesday, THE SHIFT

November 11, 1986

It began on a chill November morning with the odor of burning coffee and warm bread baking wafting through the kitchen. As these sweet, warm scents penetrated the burger bath, hungry, distracted figures grew discontent, grumbling "what time is it?" and as a player inside this tiny kitchen ended, the door was opened. Sharp blast at the knees of the outer darkness, gathering a few wandering figures into its heart. Inside, men lent syrup and jam on the soft, sticky sweetness of bread pudding. Jammy atmospheres created by the woman who called herself "Mary," herself in the kitchen was small but as time passed me and more came called by the warmth and the love, distributed in that pudding. Meanwhile, in the darkened rear of the kitchen, a man became expertly setting pots and above the hissing of gas. Emery — electrical grinders and mixers — began to prepare an intricate marble dessert known to elate chefs as "stew." As canned beef, onions, beans and other mysterious ingredients went into the bubbling brew, rich tomatoes slipped into the main room.

The front rooms were packed, stuffed like runway Park for the fifth series.
Si la libertad es gratis

¿Por qué la libertad es valiosa?
¿Por qué es la libertad de expresión?
¿Por qué es la libertad de movimiento?
¿Por qué es la libertad de pensamiento?
¿Por qué es la libertad de decisiones?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué nos la quitan?
¿Por qué es la libertad de las mujeres?
¿Por qué es la libertad de las minorías?
¿Por qué es la libertad de las personas?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los animales?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué no la valoramos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los niños?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los ancianos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los enfermos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los desvalidos?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué la abolimos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los prisioneros?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los deportados?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los exiliados?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los refugiados?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué la negamos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los inmigrantes?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los desahuciados?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los desempleados?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los desnutridos?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué la restringimos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los hogares?
¿Por qué es la libertad de las familias?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los amigos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los conocidos?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué nos la quitan?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos humanos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos políticos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos sociales?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos económicos?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué la abolimos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos civiles?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos culturales?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos religiosos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos sexuales?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué la negamos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos humanitarios?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos ambientales?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos económicos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos culturales?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué la restringimos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de las niñas?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los niños?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los ancianos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los discapacitados?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué la abolimos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los trabajadores?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los empresarios?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los consumidores?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los ciudadanos?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué la negamos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los mortales?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los invisibles?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los desaparecidos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los olvidados?

Si la libertad es gratis, ¿por qué la restringimos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los muertos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los vivos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los fallecidos?
¿Por qué es la libertad de los derechos de los benditos?
The Christian Response to Evil: An Attempt at an Apology

In the course of my personal and spiritual development, I have become sensitized to the fragility of any expressions having to do with one’s religious experience—a recognition that has often led me to believe that my opinions are not my own but belong to the mystique of Christianity. Despite this, as I finished reading Kathy Sands’s article “Serpants, Sibyls, and Sisterhood: Religious Feminism in Response to Evil” (in the lastNewsletter, I knew I had to respond. The critique presented there of what Sands calls the “dominant Christian tradition” struck various chords in me—many of them dissontant— which begged for some response.

This is not to say that a feminist critique of religious consciousness cannot be helpful in distilling a more complete understanding of the Christian tradition. But the picture of this tradition—the tradition to which I was born, which I left for a time, and through which I now struggle to grow in that faith called “Christian”—as refracted through Sands’s critique, is at best incomplete and at worst a distortion of what means to be a human being before that reality we call God. What is needed, then, to offer some balance in the ongoing dialogue, is what the old theology manuals called an “apology” of the Christian faith, that is, a kind of defense. Needless to say, this can be very difficult, especially for such an amateur as myself. What will follow, then, given my limited knowledge and vision, is nothing more than an attempt to describe the experience of what it means to call oneself a “Christian”—a fearsome task to say the least.

So, you see, I have my own confession of sorts—to make, I call myself the name of this faith: “Christian.” But this admission of seeming self-assurance carries with it all sorts of hazards. Faith—least as I experience it—is not some otherworldly flight of escape into an all-powerful, transcendent world that rescues us from final meaningfulness. Indeed, this seems to be Sands’s picture of the Christian God.

God the Christian is the same God who came to this earth, lived, died, and resurrected in weakness and vulnerability. And this is the God whom we continue to meet in our own need for love and forgiveness.

Inyou hope all day long because of your goodness, O Lord. Remember my mercy, Lord, and the love you have shown from old. Do not remember the sins of my youth. In your love remember me. (Ps. 25:7)

Faith is a struggle to hear the ever-present command of the Lord—Follow me—and to live in this relationship in the concrete, everyday struggles of our human personhood.

In more faithful moments I do believe that God is transcendent, that God gives my life meaning—even in the moments when I can no longer see any meaning. And yet, the journey that is faith is lived upon a road strewn with risks. Indeed, this was precisely the essence of the teaching of the Eastern Fathers and Mystics: To live the spiritual life is to live in the midst of a kind of “warfare,” a virtual spiritual battle. Faith is a struggle to hear the ever-present command of the Lord—Follow me—and to live in this relationship in the concrete, everyday struggles of our human personhood. Faith, as Karl Rahner said, “open[ed] oneself in the dark abysses of the wilderness we call God.”

Now it is precisely the understanding of this relationship between God and ourselves, between Creator and creature—and the cleavage of this relationship through sin—that is at the heart of the Genesis myth. I submit that there is quite another way to read the “story” (mythos) of the creation myth which does not fall prey to a misogynist reading, one that takes the myth seriously not merely as reflecting a social reality, but as relating a fundamental truth about the human condition which its author(s) experienced. For the Genesis myth is about the primal reality of ourselves as human beings: We are men and women—are creatures who dwell in life by virtue of a living God whom we believe is the source of that life. And the story—our story—is about the “fall” of human beings from that covenant relationship, from the life that God spoke through the Word of creation into the nonreality of sin.

And what was the sin of the first Fall? Thomas Merton remarks that it was primarily an “attitude of mind”9 that drove the first parents to their sin and that this attitude was the basis of the decision to eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Following the thoughts of St. Bernard, Merton continues:

This attitude was a way of looking at reality that condemned man, by its very nature, to become unreal—paradoxical and thus impossible. The result was simply this: Adam, who possessed an existential and experiential knowledge of all that was good and all that was real, and who was mystically united with God, the infinite source of all actual and possible goodness, wanted to improve on this by knowing something else, which, though it would be something more, in desiring to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he wanted, in fact, to add to the knowledge of good, which he already had, the knowledge of evil. He wanted to have an experience, an existential knowledge of evil.

The “original sin” of Adam, then, was a rejection of his “true knowledge” of his “true self,” our truth—in other words, that we are creatures who fashioned in the image and likeness of God. As a creature, my identity is rooted in the divine image in which all persons have life and in the divine being who begat us out of love. In the words of the psalmist, “The Lord made us, we belong to him” (Ps. 100:5). Adam’s sin—and my sin—is the rejection of this relationship, grounded in his being, the “existential communion that . . . made [him] fully real.” Moreover, to elaborate further the ethos of this sin, his was a desire rooted in a kind of “Promethean instinct,” in which he dares to “reach down into the depth of his own spirit and find the forbidden, existential fire.”

But nothing about his doctrine of original sin can make any sense without the concrete experience of its reality—sin—within our own lives, our own unique existential situations? In other words, the Fall is not some crazy story that was concocted to oppress a particular social group. It is good to feel guilty, but it shouldn’t be. Rather, it is a story that tells the community of believers who they are in the depths of their being as a people before God. To bring the discussion to a personal level, by my faith I know that I am free, and in this freedom I know that I am accountable before the living God. As such, I am codetermined by my guilt that is, in the words of the Confiteor: “I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do.” I have sinned in the sense that I have given up to the life of faith which I profess: “I have not thought enough, I have not loved enough, and have not suffered enough.”

I sin—but how? The answer to this question must be found within each of our hearts. But I also think that the writer of the creation story knew something about this very human reality of sin. For we only need to look, I believe, to the words of the serpent, who offered to Adam the promise of being like God (Gen. 3:5). This desire to be like God is at the heart of my sin: when I want to go it alone; when I don’t recognize my inner poverty and need—for God and for others; when I secure myself in the barriers of law and culture; when I fill my life with all sorts of projects and passing pleasures—in other words, when I make my life and my desires the center, and say no to God.”

It is here, then, that I must part with Sands and offer an alternative tale of the myth. She looks at the same myth, and she calls the “patriarchal and misogynist reading” (p. 10) of that myth, as a manifestation of male power, an oppressive ideology that must be overcome. Rejecting the understanding of the human person’s relationship to God in the order of creation, she replaces it with a view of “the tragic condition of existence” (p. 11), this is a view in which Prometheus, the figure invoked by Merton earlier, sees the “attractiveness of the fruit” (p. 10), in Sands’s words, and must grab for the forbidden fire. It is a vision of life where there is really no other option than to be swallowed by the night of tragedy, saying yes to life even in the midst of that night. In her words, we would “grow into our scars, and [embrace] them” (p. 12).

The sharp contrast that Sands draws betweenthe tragic vision that she embraces and the Christian belief in God seems to indicate that, in her view, the believer cannot really deal with evil, since she conceives the “presumably all-powerful God” (p. 11) as an escape barrier, any sins that will rescue us from the final tragedy. Now I can’t even begin here to offer any reasons why one should believe in God—a God who, our faith tells us, claims to be the Creator of our world and being and yet, at the same time, is One who, we believe, comes in weakness, to touch and heal our wounds. Indeed, the evidence against belief seems quite overwhelming at times, plunging us into the darkest night. The essence of one’s faith becomes uncertainty. My faith will not save me from the experience of the scars, “the scars [i] carry and the scars [i] have inflicted” (p. 12). This tension—between the Reign of God that is present within us, and the Reign of God that is not yet; between the knowledge of myself as touched by God, and the knowledge of myself is not from the Lord’s grace—is of the very essence of my faith.

The life of the soul in openness to God, the unity, the perfect and unitive life I as I am, I have lived, and desired is the condition of existence and tenacity, forsakenness and hope against hope, the silent strains of love and grace, trembling on the strappado, which we love.”

To dwell within this tension—in acceptance of who I am as a fallible human being, but to live in openness to the gradually revealed gift of God that I am—this is what it means to live in faith.

I believe in a God whose way, as a part of the world, is not of the world, but is something that God has given to be a way of living out in the world of the world, which is a way of participating in the life of the world.

9. This attitude was a way of looking at reality that condemned man, by its very nature, to become unreal—paradoxical and thus impossible. The result was simply this: Adam, who possessed an existential and experiential knowledge of all that was good and all that was real, and who was mystically united with God, the infinite source of all actual and possible goodness, wanted to improve on this by knowing something else, which, though it would be something more, in desiring to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he wanted, in fact, to add to the knowledge of good, which he already had, the knowledge of evil...
though, as one can gather from the above remarks, I do not think that this is the only "word" that can be spoken about the Christian faith, or even the tradition through which we hear this faith in our own time. In the end, I simply wish to accent that which binds us

To dwell within this tension—in acceptance of who I am as afallible human being, but to live in openness to the gradually revealed gift of God that I am—this is what it means to live in faith.

instead of that which would separate us—both women and men, those who would call themselves feminist and those who would not. All I can affirm is what I believe in the end, the truth that is told in the story of the faith that I confess, a truth in which I believe, even while there is darkness in my heart, even while there is night in the world.

To conclude, again I wish to appeal to Thomas Mer- ton, who died 20 years ago this past December. Perhaps the greatest struggle of his life—between the call to prayer in the silence of his monastic vocation and the call to bring that experience of God into the world—was brought to fruition—and resolution—on an otherwise unremarkable March day in 1958. On that day, "at the corner of Fourth and Walnut" in Louisville, Kenne- tucky, he simply passed at an intersection. He sensed in a moment that, as he later wrote: "I was suddenly overwhelmed in the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers." This vision, a vision of unity, is not something that we can have and bring about by ourselves. It is, in the end, as are all the gifts that are good, to us by God.

Second, there are people who were born non- Catholics and have actually chosen (as in picked, willed, opted for, decided) to become Catholics. I think of folks like Edwin Stein and Dorothy Day—people generally sensible, gifted, and even dedicated. I've decided to allow them this quirky attraction to Catholicism, even if I'm baffled by it.

And third, there's me. I'm what I call a Ping-Pong Catholic. Born in ... then opted out ... then back in and back out, in and out. Sometimes deeply committed—sometimes downright repulsed.

Right now I'm back in the fold. I know. You're curious about what prompted me to return this time. Well, it wasn't the bishops' pastoral on peace, and surely it wasn't their draft pastoral on women and the church. It certainly wasn't a personal request from the cardinal to forgive and forget. (People who graduate from Harvard make a science of not getting personal.) I guess the biggest reason I've recommitted myself to the holy catholic and apostolic church is—well—environmental concern.

You see, we made a decision at home—a big decision—to stop throwing plastic into the town landfill. It never biodegrades. It's always plastic. Oh sure, in a hundred years or so it might degrade—but that only means it changes from one big piece of plastic into lots of little pieces of plastic.

This big decision caused a dilemma for me. Being in one of my repulsed phases with the Church, I had a problem. I had all this plastic. Catholic stuff ready for the dump. I had these plastic scaloppini (you know, those little plastic pictures attached by strings that you put around your neck—the pictures hang in the front and back and make you look thin). After I got dressed, well, the back picture was fine, but the front one didn't lay down too well. So scaloppini were in the junk pile, on their way to the landfill.

I had also accumulated a lot of little plastic statues. I was especially worried about my "hold-my-hand-and-I'll-walk-with-you" Infant of Prague. The statue itself was only about the size of an overfed two-year-old—but the clothing I needed to get a special landfill variance under the "excessive dumping of plastic lace" clause.

I had maybe a half-dozen of those little blue medals of Mary that my mom used to pin to my undergarments. I know that they look gold around the edges, but I checked all plastic.

And rosary beads—big cardboard box in my top dresser drawer next to the knot of run-filled pantyhose and my Gramma's hand-made handkerchiefs. Handkerchiefs were such a big idea—thank God for tissues, which, by the way, break down so nicely in the landfill. Anyways, I had loads of old plastic rosary beads, and a little plastic card that says, "Let's pray the rosary, not just say the rosary."

Why I'm a Catholic

If you're a Catholic, you know that the world is divided into two groups of people: there are Catholics and there are non-Catholics. I divide Catholics into three distinct categories. (As for the non-Catholics—they really require no additional distinctions.)

First, there are people who are born, are raised, and die Catholic, and never raise a question. Sure, maybe they ask, "What time is it?" or "Does this shirt match these pants?" But that pretty much takes care of it.

My daily massess, too, the one in ordinary time and the one in some other kind of time. They've got plastic covers to keep the real part of the mass clean. (I guess they're thinking you're using them so much and all.) Anyway, it all adds up to a lot of plastic. Considering the landfill decision, I said, "What the heck. I've got all the stuff. I don't want to just throw it all away. Why not just rejoin the church?"

And you know, it made me feel kind of superior. I wasn't going to be just another idiot in the use-it-then-throw-it-away culture. No. If I was going to be a droid, I would at the very least be a Catholic droid.

Lisa Malan spends her time between Masses at the kitchen sink washing out plastic bags.

And My Heart Came Back Alive

Ten years ago in Calcutta, Louise and I heard an astonishing story from a British Anglican clergyman who had been in West Bengal for several weeks. He had been traveling in the back seat of a car with the local bishop. They came to a railroad crossing, and the inevitable beggar, blind and disfigured, approached them for alms. Neither the bishop nor the minister gave anything to the beggar, "on principle," the minis- ter told us, although, he admitted, the principle was not entirely clear. The driver of the car, presumably less principled, gave some coins to the beggar who responded with a few words to the driver and left. The minister, now curious, asked the driver what the beg- gar had said. And the driver repeated the words which had been spoken to him so quietly in Bengali by this man seemingly abandoned by God. "I shall remember you when I am in the kingdom."
This spring, ten years later, and a half-dozen years since I had last done any international development work, I found myself in the back seat of a car. This time the setting was Ghana, and I was with several international public health and nutrition experts when the beggar approached us. There was an awkward moment when he held out his palm. No one moved. I sat there immobilized, not wishing to be seen by the beggar to make a scene, to disturb the conversation. Then the traffic moved and it was over.

I went back to the hotel and filled my pockets with small bills and then returned to my site visits and meetings. At least I would be certain that scene would not recur. There was a lot to do during our time in Ghana. Once a proud leader of the non-aligned nations, Africa's first independent state, inheritor of the rich Ashanti tradition, Ghana had become a desperately poor country. For every dollar of foreign exchange earned, 36 cents now goes to repay past debts. The rest goes to the entrepreneurs of the export industry or is sold to the highest industrial bidder at "foreign exchange auctions." Meanwhile malnutrition is exactly double what it was at the time of independence. A third of all medical visits are for treatment of malaria. And there are half as many doctors as ten years ago.

After such a long time, I was not confident of my ability to still do this kind of work. And when, after a few days, I managed to get beyond that concern, I found myself nearly overwhelmed by the schedule (quite exhausting, even given my generally obsessive and compulsive nature). Still I managed to spend some time, without other team members, doing what I have always loved best—walking through towns and villages, playing a little volleyball with the kids, and talking with their parents. These were the times that I felt especially present on behalf of a community of caring people, that whatever I might be privileged to give or to share was done so on behalf of Louise, my companions at the farm, and all the folks in the Haley House community. I felt that when I sat with the family of a building caretaker in Kintampo as they prepared food, pumped water, and spoke of joys and sorrows. I felt it when I played with the basket seller's young child who called me "dada." And I felt that way when I met Wisdom, young taxi driver in Accra who sought out in his off-hours to talk about his dreams. Just prior to my leaving for Ghana, the farm community had devoted an evening worship to my send-off. There was a haunting James Taylor song about a visit he had made to the third world which included a phrase, "And my heart came back alive" that returned to me again and again in Africa. There also were some tender and caring words about reconnecting and rekindling which proved to be at the core of my experience.

For it was this reconnecting that meant most to me during those three weeks in Ghana, the reconnecting and the rekindling of similar memories from my years in Asia. I found myself wishing that some of that also could be part of our lives at home—something more than our nostalgic glances at old pictures and slides—something more real to share with Lisa and Bill, Clare and David, and the kids. I left Ghana excited about going home, but also a little sad.

But those mixed feelings disappeared the moment I walked into our dining room at the farm and saw Domingo, our "overgrown railroad" guest from El Salvador eating jalapeño peppers, rice and black beans with the community. Later I watched Domingo trying to stay balanced on a bicycle amid youthful squeals of delight, and when, that evening, I heard Domingo quietly recite the Lord's Prayer in Spanish as he sat with us, I knew that the connection for which I yearned had been made.

It was all of one cloth, and somehow we were woven into it along with the caretaker's family; the child of the basket seller; young Wisdom, the taxi driver; the beggar from Calcutta; and this good and gentle campesino. I knew that their hopes and dreams for a better world had now become ours as well.

Who knows? With such companions in this life, we, like the driver, might someday be remembered in the Kingdom.

E. James Levinson lived at Haley House from 1982 to 1984. He and his wife, Louise, and children, Noah and Dana, now live in New York. Jimmy has been doing consulting for third world governments on food policy issues.

Plants are drawing to celebrate Haley House's 25th Anniversary with a gathering of Catholic Workers and other folk-liberals during the summer of '94. In addition to exploring issues of concern, we hope to include a children's program and arts in the Catholic Worker celebration. We will be in touch as soon as more firm takes shape.

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We at Haley House want to gather to celebrate Bev's life with us. She shared so much of her time, energy and joy in our community. It is wonderful to have so many of her friends and family here tonight. It is a real testimony to the love and warmth we have experienced from Bev.

When I think of her, certain images come to mind: Flavia cards, chocolate cakes with fiddy beans, 8 lbs of hamburger meat, a mint green sundress. Bev was a bright spot every Monday morning on my shift. Over the past year she came into Haley days as well. She would push my north from via bakes from the soup round. She argued with for lunch. She prepared had destrofett. Bev should show some bull. We could offer. Fun, loving, warm, let us celebrate Bev's.

Bev had a gift of giving. She was able to help people. She shared her smiles and joyed with what might have. I don't have my unique work going through. Haley House on a Sunday morning. In person some.

Bev was a beautiful person, dealing with hard workers, yet always smiling and came with all. She was always "just work" to many people. She looked and told her how as a picture. The kitchen area of the Haley. I hope to share that day. I hope.

J. Kenneally

Bev's admirals, her enemies are notable, which bibliography it's not about loving the "real" her. It was easy to recognize and appreciate the Beverly who opened himself into the work for hunger and the "un-" to our lives to another lovely person (on either side of the country). She was the classic drug mother, mother superior, mother in law, and being grandmother. Despite her devotion of choice—her those personas were the most visible. Another level exist and grow and deepen, almost imperceptibly.

It was toward the end when the cancer stole most of her energy. When the run-
ring around the "story" was no longer possible, the "other" became more obvious. Not that she stopped for a minute taking care of every person around her - from children to visitors - but the consciousness with which she was engaged was easier to see. I watched as she passed around the ever-present picture of the grandchild. Although each photo seemed to weigh tons, each was treated as a precious relic (as indeed it was since her family, protected her from seeing these little ones very often). Her presence to each photo, each captured moment, was wonder-filled. It was a glimpse of the "story" that happens on the other side of death.

**GRACIAS**

We are always grateful for your gifts. Here are some suggestions for specific needs of our guests:

- toiletry articles, especially toothbrushes, toothpaste, moisturizing cream, shampoo, combs, deodorant
- men’s clothing, especially socks, underwear, t-shirts, pants with small to average waist size, coats and jackets, warm winter clothes like thermals, gloves, mittens, hats, scarves, etc.
- vitamins
- shoe polish and brushes
- coffee cups/mugs
- chess sets
- playing cards

Your time is also a valuable gift—call and find out when our next volunteer orientation is and find out what you can do—262-3781.

**LOVE THE CONTRAS?**

by Fred Jacob

Jinotega province in northern Nicaragua has been my home for almost a year and a half. I work in the village of El Cedro, a resettlement camp near Honduras and only 15 kilometers from where Ben Linder was murdered. One fifth of Cedro’s 260 people have been lost as a direct result of the six contra attacks since the village’s founding in 1982.

As co-director of the Veterans Peace Action Teams (VPAT), I spend half of my time living in El Cedro. I have grown to know and love these people as family, and I shared their grief as well as their joy.

I am constantly impressed with the commitment, courage, and determination they exhibit in the face of an overwhelmingly difficult life. Recently I witnessed a display of forgiveness and love such as I have never experienced while working on a brigade, I was invited to attend and document a secret regional peace initiative between the contras and Nicaraguan government representatives. Here was a sense of an historic meeting as I walked with the negotiators and a security force, armed only with my camera and harboring a mistrust of the contras based on destruction I had seen with my own eyes.

After an arduous five kilometer walk, we arrived at Santa Maria de Tasaua, the agreed upon location. And there, for the first time, I met the contras face to face. As the meetings began, I was authorized to photograph whatever I wished.

Sandshakes and hugs set the tone for a meeting where mutual respect was the dominant theme. The atmosphere was more like a picnic than a confrontation.

While photographing the combatants exchanging gifts and smiles, I realized that peace would best be achieved when Nicaraguans were allowed to deal with Nicaraguans without outside interference. It was also clear that the fighting would never stop unless the field soldiers were ready to admit they did not want to kill their brothers. What I heard from both sides is that it was time for the killing to stop; they wanted peace, and to get back to their farms.

I was left with a strong impression of the true solidarity that exists between the Nicaraguan people, be they contras or Sandinistas. But I was totally unprepared for the stunning event that took place eight days later.

The formal meeting was to be held; this time 30 officials thirty farmers were there. As we waited in the hot sun for the contras, I wondered how the people of El Cedro would react. They had lost many loved ones - young children, sons, fathers, nurses, and teachers, some to this particular band of contras. How would these people feel? How bitter were they? How deep was their anger? Did they want retribution?

Slowly the contras walked up the hill. They appeared jubilantly nervous at the coming confrontation with the civilians they had been persecuting for six years.

As they topped the rise of the hill and came into view of the people, I could sense them stiffen in preparation for an uncertain reception. What actually happened could not have been predicted by anyone. The farmers of El Cedro gave the contras a spontaneous and long applause. They clapped the hands politely and firmly. This action spoke more eloquently than any words. They said: We accept you, we want you back, we forgive you, we love you.

Later I talked to the people. They said they were not welcoming the contras as liberators, nor were they forgetting the pain that they had caused. But they were forgiving them without giving them without reservations. They wanted them back so that everyone could begin to rebuild.

I embraced this moment as one of the most powerful of my life. That these ill-used farmers could pour out this unreserved feeling through their pain was a lesson I will never forget, and I only hope that their wisdom will guide me during my lifetime.

Reprinted courtesy of Central America Solidarity Association (CASA)/CAEV
The personalist tradition we try to make our own encouraged us to not merely lament the loss of long-time residents. Most importantly, we have come to know and love the long-time residents. A spirit of independence and neighborhood characterizes the house.

The Soup Kitchen is open to homeless men 7 days each week serving breakfast and lunch. From 2AM to 9AM clothing, movies, shaving, and sewing supplies are also made available. We attempt to create a place of refuge from violence and anonymity in a spirit of welcome. Elderly neighbors join us four evenings each week for food and companionship. Periodic trips are arranged with these women and men to the farm.

Noonday Farm is the answer to a long-time dream of having a place to nourish our bodies with the fruit of the earth and our spirits with life lived at a different pace. Children and family life are marks of the farm as is a constant struggle to work for peace and justice.

The Roaring House provides low income housing in the form of 5 one-bedroom units, three studies, one three-bedroom apartment, an office and a community room. Education in social justice, in racial, cultural, and class integration, and in non-violence is ongoing. Our commitments to justice and peace have been tested and transformed from ideology to practice - but, not without the revelation of each and every personal imperfection.