

March 1989





PRINT BY MARGARETE WALTERS
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MARCH 1989

This issue's cover was created by Margarete Walters, a gentle soul, a caring friend of Haley House. Margarete lived in a cold-water-flat on nearby Lawrence Street over twenty years ago. She was too shy to come into the soup kitchen, but would drop off her home-made bread. Margarete was deeply religious and a dedicated artist. Late one night on her way home, she was raped and murdered.

Week By Week

The big event over the summer was the wedding of Jo Connelly and Paul del Junco. After a honeymoon of stopping at New England inns, they've settled in Toronto. Rakesh, Shandor, and Cy were wonderful antidotes to the "long, dry summer" with their enthusiastic and zany presence. In the "welcome to the Haley Hotel Dept.," we had a steady stream of interesting visitors—Marjilene and Terese from Holland Pax Christi; Suchilco from Japan; Margaret from Jamaica; Katja from Sweden; Jennifer from the New York Catholic Worker; Sandy from the Catholic Worker Gardens of Hamlyn, West Virginia; and the charming brothers of Tricia, Diane, and Jo. Diane and Deirdre were both afflicted 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 UFW 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 Vasconcelas and Jay Steele, godsister Brigid McKenna, and godbrother 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 Ailanthus/resistance-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, Jean Holladay, Pat Garrity, Sheila Parks, Carol Bellin, Deirdre Doran and Vermont friend Mel Goertz brought peace cranes and signs to Pease 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 Ched Meyers who shared his reflections on Mark's gospel. We welcomed back Michael, Maureen, and Aidin Carey from England and Ireland. They also brought back greetings from Amsterdam, where Eileen Lawter and friends are doing well in a new Catholic Worker community. We bid a sad farewell to Colin Kerbawy, Mary Beth Braddick, 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 IBM 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 freezers. We have learned and grown through the summer's expansion. Now we ready ourselves for the turning inward of the winter cycle . . .

Sunday, May 11, 1986 Elderly Dinner Elizabeth, Tricia, Bill & Susan

Tuna-noodle casserole, green beans and corn. B.C. High gingerbread for dessert. Large crowd - 35? at last count. Tricia came for the first time, she is a Tremont st. neighbor inspired by reading The Long Loneliness and was obviously inspired - she says it explains how to run Catholic Worker stoves on page 76, what to do about cup shortages on page 212.

Saturday, May 24, 1986 Tricia, Julia, Richie, Donald, Mary

Fewer guys came through today about 60. Several were drinking and wanted to leave and re-enter - which I declined to allow. Mrs. Rogers called the police about a man who was urinating in the alley. I apologized for any upset that it may have caused her and asked her to come in while I turned off the T.V. and spoke to the guys. They were receptive and promised never to do such a thing...

Richie came from B.C. High. He "had" to come to fulfill his credits. A 15 year old boy who was a great help. He asked me why I kept coming here. Why didn't the men just get jobs and better themselves, these men were just lazy. I said that about 25 years ago. Indeed!

Tricia, Mary and Donald and the Medfield Group worked really well together. The day was full of "why's"....

Saturday, July 19, 1986 Vince, Mary, Elly And cannot forget a host of the guys who helped out during the morning at various stages.... Opened up to a small group for cold cereal, then sweets. Served American Chop Suey, peas and lemonade to around 70, plus a few stragglers - boisterous due to the wrestling on T.V. A mellow morning for the most part.

"J" ... got in a tiff with another guy over what turned out to be nothing. He was escalating, becoming louder, bothering other guys, so I asked him to leave - he refused and stayed for another couple of hours! I barred him until August 10.... Ron told me: "Thank you for letting me help you today..."! Tescha has one much, this place, these people...

P.S. A morning like this makes you think of the "old days" when the man ran the soup kitchen!

Sunday, August 10, 1986

Elderly shift with Judith, Tricia, and the following from Beacon Hill Friends: Mary Ball, Carol, Kristie - the Friends Group was fantastic. Kristie saved the day on gravy preparation. Served beef stroganoff over rice with fresh carrots and tomato salad. Cake for dessert... Ray looks better than he has in some time. Betty was a sweetie, in a really good mood, made the first batch of coffee. Constantine apparently still angry over con

EXCERPTS

FROM THE LOG

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

frontation with Joe - still hasn't shown up. John stopped by early in the shift but didn't stay for supper - stomach bothering him still. Mr. McCormack, still sporting a lovely straw hat, gave me more jig lessons. He hasn't been overdoing it on the food lately and has been coming in before serving time to socialize a bit. Overall a great shift - Eddy Michaels said we were "very organized" - said we were like "the Russian Ballet." Alright!

Monday, September 29, 1986 Tricia, Vince, Doyne, Willie, Jim, Todd (Welcome back, Todd)... Talked with a young man named Christopher today... He came in wearing a stereo headphone contraption, and putting the outlet into his mouth! Had a nice chat with him; he's a very gentle, articulate fellow, talked about SS1, he's connected with Dorchester Mental Health Center. I felt sorry for him the way the other guys made fun of him... Finally, we had closed up and were waiting outside the door at around 12:15 p.m. when 2 of the Indians came by, quite drunk, asking to eat. When I refused, they were quite abusive. It made me think of Dorothy Day's line: "People come to join us in our wonderful work!" Lord, have mercy...

Saturday, October 11th, 1986 Julia and Jim L., Brian, KMK, John P., Vince, Hona Julia was on alone and prayed for help from the Lord. He brought her a whole parade of experienced hands and she glided through with a smile on her face. A sunny, cool day, many men, 4 sittings...

Absurdity of the week: As Gordon was cooking Wednesday elderly, a car with two young dudes pulled up to ask if we wanted to buy some brillo pads! We thought of checking on our downstairs supply!

October 19, 1986 Monday An image from this morning... in the midst of a hectic serving, when I put the plate in front of him, one of the young Black guys put his hands in prayer before his face, closed his eyes, and offered a few words to himself... Deo gratias...

Tuesday: THE SHIFT

November 11, MCLXXVI

It began on a chill November morning with the odor of perking coffee and warm bread pudding wafting through the kitchen. As these sweet, warm scents penetrated the bitter cold, hungry huddled figures grew discontent, shouting, "What time is it?" And as a prayer inside this tiny kitchen ended, the door was opened and light and warmth took a brief, sharp stab at the broadside of the outer darkness, gathering a few shivering figures into its heart. Inside, men put syrup and jam on the soft, sticky sweetness of bread pudding, lavishly arranged by the woman who called herself "Trish." At first, the crowd was small but as time passed, more and more came, called by the warmth and the love distilled in that pudding. Meanwhile, in the darkened rear of the kitchen, beneath suspended pots and above the hissing of gas flames, Emery-clerical garments set aside - began to prepare an intricate culinary creation known to elite chefs as "stew." As canned beef, onions, beans and other mysterious substances went into the bubbling brew, rich tempting odors slipped into the main room.

The front rooms were packed, stuffed like Fenway Park for the fifth series

game, and the warmth trembled as guests were asked to wait outside until others had left. It trembled again as blameless Seaborn found an almost empty bottle and, rather than chance it draining out and wetting the trash can, finished it up in the middle of the front room. He was asked to depart and after mild protestation, did so. As the noon hour approached, peace returned and stew emerged. The accolades for the stew were enormous, seconds and third encoras were requested. Finally, at 1, we closed the doors, and quickly (1 1/2 hour - 45 minutes) had completed the day.

THE CAST

The Woman (Trish):	Patricia
The Priest:	Emery
The Ingenue:	Katie
The Cavalry:	Roseanna
The Bread Breaker:	Duke
The Fool	Ken

Tuesday, November 18, 1986 The Book of Halex, Chapter 32

Verily it was on the eighteenth day of November that a sign appeared in the sky; a flaming orb which brightened the city. Heretics and doubters called it "just the sun," but those raised in the Light know it to be the sign of a new day. In the advent of this sign I mixed the pancake mix and saw that there were no lumps and it was good. Our guests were few (less than two score and ten, I judged), for the day was blessed with warmth uncommon for this moment in the cycle of days. At about nine, as the dens of stockbrokers in New York begin to squirm with life a small conflict came to our land - Renee (drunk, confused drag queen) was (as others said) "conned" out of her "gold" necklace. There was a great deal of nonphysical violence and abuse which finally grew calm after repeated pleas and warnings. (Most of the abuse was from Renee at a friend of the now-absent "con" man). Stew was offered up as lunch - a trifle burnt for taste - and served just shy of 2 sittings...

Wednesday, November 19, 1986 Mary, Alden, Joanne, Sandy, Joan and Jo Oatmeal and Muffins to a small quiet crowd in the snow and the wind. Oatmeal didn't move really. Weather got a little nicer and the crowd got a little more drunk and high. Boy do I hate playing po-lice. Anyway, no incidents. Served a real meaty spaghetti sauce to a grateful crowd. The men were almost constantly flirting with the female volunteers today... strange. Is snow an aphrodisiac?

Thursday, January 22, 1987 Patti, Randy, Bob, Jill, Deirdra, Gordon (Sam as back-up). Videotapes: Trading Places and White Knights - the new opiate of the masses kept things quiet... served muffins and petit-fours for breakfast to a moderate house... "Leftover stew" for lunch to about 85. Jill made pumpkin cake but it wasn't done on time so the elderly will luck out tonight... One very drunk fellow (Waskey/George) fell asleep in his chair and despite our best efforts (including carrying his chair into the elements) he was impossible to rouse. Finally one of his friends said the magic words, "George, get up"... (now why didn't I think of that?), and at 12:45 to rave reviews...

popcorn sales were off unfortunately... stay tuned...

Sunday, February 1, 1987

... well, how to describe it - three times I went to the door to say the St. Vincent de Paul prayer and no I didn't leave... JC/JC, Eddy, Little John, Sean, helped by Curt... Turkey a la duke, mashed potatoes and bread and butter, milk to 4+ rather chaotic servings. Food enjoyed by gentlemen. Glad it's over! Peace, Love, Joy, Beverly

Si la libertad es gratis

Si la libertad es gratis
 ¿Por qué muchos la venden?
 Si la libertad es derecho del hombre
 ¿Por qué se la niegan?
 Si la libertad es la vida,
 ¿Por qué nos la quitan?
 Si la libertad es nuestro pueblo
 ¿Por qué la enferman de odio?
 ¿Será posible que ser libre en mi propia tierra, es penado con el sufrimiento de nuestros hijos, nuestros hermanos y hasta con la misma muerte?

If liberty is free
 Then why do so many sell it?
 If liberty is man's right
 Why is it denied him?
 If liberty is life
 Then why is it taken from us?
 If liberty is our people
 Why is it poisoned with hate?
 Could it be that freedom in my land
 must be burdened with the suffering of our children,
 our brothers,
 and even with death itself?

La distancia y el silencio son mis torturas
 Mis pensamientos y mis celos son mi castigo
 Mis noches de desvelo es mi martirio.
 Todo lo que yo he valorado,
 Todo lo que he tenido
 Todo lo bello y hermoso que puede dar la vida
 La vida misma, la alegría de nuestros hijos.
 El mismo cielo, Las estrellas, y todo lo bello
 y hermoso que una mujer puede darle a un hombre
 Tus palabras, en mis momentos difíciles
 Un consuelo sano en mis momentos amargos.
 Todo eso y mucho mas eres tú
 Gracias por eso, y muchas cosas bellas y hermosas que me diste de tu vida.

Distance and silence are my tormentors
 My thoughts and jealousy are my punishment
 My sleepless nights are my martyrdom
 All that I have valued, All that I have had
 All the wonder and beauty that life can give,
 Life itself, The joy of our children, The sky itself,
 The stars and all the beauty that a woman can give to a man,
 Your words in my most difficult moments
 All this and much more are you.
 Thank you for that and many beautiful and wonderful things
 that you gave to me of your life.

La pena de ser pobre,
 Vender el cuerpo al precio de un Bocado,
 Ser el alimento de una burocracia
 Ser la gota del patrón
 Ser el significado de la Inmundicia,
 Ser el sufrir de un pueblo.
 La angustia nos muestra que
 La existencia está vacía y que la vida es muerte.
 Lo que une a un pueblo empobrecido
 es la Pasión a la libertad.

The penalty for being poor,
 Selling one's body for the price of a crumb,
 To be the nourishment of a bureaucracy
 To be a drop of the boss's sweat
 To be the meaning of filth
 To be the suffering of a people.
 Anguish shows us that
 existence is empty and that life is death.
 That which unifies an impoverished people is
 A Passion for Freedom.

Manuel Escoba, a Salvadoran, spent some months at Noon-day Farm on his way to Canada as part of the "overground railroad." He is currently living in Kitchener, Ontario.

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 keep my opinions about such matters to myself! Despite this, as I finished reading Kathy Sands' article "Serpents, Sibyls, and Sisterhood: Religious Feminism in Response to Evil" (in the last Newsletter), 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 dissonant—that 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' critique, is at best incomplete and at worst a distortion of the Christian understanding of what it 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 get very sticky—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 by the name of this faith: "Christian." But this admission of seeming self-assurance carries with it all sorts of hazards. Faith—at least as I experience it—is not some otherworldly flight of escape into an all-powerful, transcendent Godhead that rescues us from final meaninglessness. Indeed, this seems to be Sands' picture of the Christian God.

To the contrary, the God of the Christian is the same God who came in the person of Jesus, a God who came in weakness and vulnerability. And this is the God whom we continue to meet in our own need for love and forgiveness:

In you I hope all day long
because of your goodness, O Lord.
Remember your mercy, Lord,
and the love you have shown from of old.
Do not remember the sins of my youth.
In your love remember me. (Ps. 24:5-7)

"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 Mothers: 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[s] oneself in the dark abysses of the wilderness we call God."¹

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 primordial reality of ourselves as human beings: We—both 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"² that drove the first parents to their sin and that this attitude was at the heart of their decision to eat of 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 . . . [the attitude] was simply this: that 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 reality, wanted to improve on this by knowing something else, which, he thought, 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.³

The "original sin" of Adam, then, was a rejection of his "true self." This truth—which is also our truth—is that we are creatures who are 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 begot us out of love. In the words of the psalmist, "The Lord made us, we belong to him" (Ps. 100:3). Adam's sin—and my sin—is the rejection of this relationship, grounded in his being, the "existential communion that . . . made [him] fully real."⁴ Moreover, to elaborate further the ethos of this sin, his was a desire rooted in a kind of "Promethean instinct,"⁵ in which he dares to "reach down into the depth of his own spirit and find the forbidden, existential fire."⁶

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.⁷ In other words, the Fall is not some crazy story that was concocted to oppress a particular group, or to make us feel guilty when we shouldn't. 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

"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."

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, in what I have failed to do . . ." I know in my heart that I have not lived up to the life of faith which I profess: "I have not thought enough, I have not loved enough, and have not suffered enough."⁸

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.⁹

It is here, then, that I must part with Sands and offer an alternative reading of the myth. She looks at the same myth, and what she calls the "patriarchal and misogynist reading" (p. 10) of that myth, as a manifestation of the oppressive evil of patriarchy, an oppression 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). Indeed, this is a vision in which Prometheus, the figure invoked by Merton earlier, sees the "attractiveness of the fruit" (p. 10), in Sands' 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 between the 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 hatch of sorts who 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, and the Reign of God that is not yet; between the knowledge of myself as touched by God, and the knowledge of myself as far 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 periods of aridity and dullness, guilt and despondency, contrition and repentance, forsakenness and hope against hope, the silent strings of love and grace, trembling on the verge of a certainty which if gained is lost.¹⁰

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.

All this brings me, in a roundabout way, to patriarchy, which was after all the focus of Sands' article. Clearly the social reality of patriarchy has had a profound effect upon the symbol systems of Christianity—

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

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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 Merton, 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"¹¹ in Louisville, Kentucky, he simply paused 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."¹² 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 things that are good, given to us by God.

I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could all see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed.¹³

¹Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad, 1984), p. 6.

²Thomas Merton, *The New Man* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 1961), p. 105.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁷Rahner, *Foundations*, p. 110.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹Jean Vanier, *The Broken Body* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), pp. 20-21.

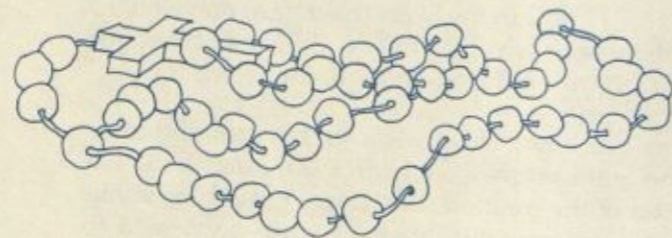
¹⁰Erich Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 122.

¹¹Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1966), p. 140.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 142.

Vincent Masi, a former resident of 23 Dartmouth St., currently resides at 54 Montgomery St. He is working on a degree in nursing.



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.

Second, there are people who were *born* non-Catholics and have actually *chosen* (as in picked, wanted, opted for, decided) to become Catholics. I think of folks like Edith 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 teeny, weeny pieces of plastic.

This big decision caused a dilemma for me. Being in one of my repulsed phases with the Church, I had a real problem. I had all this plastic Catholic stuff ready for the dump. I had these plastic scapulas (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 itch?). After I got breasts, well, the back picture was fine, but the front one didn't lay down too well. So scapulas 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 clothes! I'd need 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 undershirts. I know that they *look* like gold around the edges, but I checked: all plastic.

And rosary beads—a big cardboard gift box in my top dresser drawer next to the knot of run-filled panty hose and my Gramma's hand-me-down handkerchiefs. Handkerchiefs were such a gross idea—thank God for tissues, which, by the way, break down so nicely in the landfill. Anyway, 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."

My daily missals, 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 missal 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 droid 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 Mahar 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 minister 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 beggar 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."

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.)

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 as he held out his palm. No one moved. I sat there immobilized, not wishing to be unseemly, 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 nonaligned 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, 58 cents now goes to repay past debts. The rest goes to the entrepreneurs of the export industry or is sold to the highest industrial bidders 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 away, I wasn't 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 myself 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 way 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, a young taxi driver in Accra who sought me 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 "overground 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.

F. James Levinson lived at Haley House from 1982 to 1984. He and his wife, Louise, and children, Noah and Dora, now live at Noonday Farm. Jimmy has been doing consulting for third world governments on food policy issues.

Plans are brewing to celebrate Haley House's 25th Anniversary with a gathering of Catholic Workers and other fellow travellers during the summer of '91 or '92. In addition to workshops exploring issues of concern, we hope to include a children's program and an arts in the 'Catholic Worker' celebration. We will be in touch as soon as more form takes shape.

REMARKS BY ILONA O'CONNOR AT THE LITURGY HONORING BEVERLY PRATT, AND FURTHER REFLECTIONS BY FRIENDS:

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 experienced from Bev.

When I think of her, certain images come to mind; Flavia cards, chocolate cakes with jelly beans, 20lbs 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 pressway north from via beeper from the soup round. She argued with for lunch. She prepared had defrosted. Bev should show some "cul-bast we could offer.

Fun, loving, warm, let us celebrate Bev's

Beverly had a gift of giving. Cared to helping people. She shared her smiles and joyed what might have I can sometimes close my myself wacking through House on a Sunday morning again in person some-

Beverly's red hair, her energy, her exuberance—these were her trademarks which knowing her. Or knowing the 'real' her... It was easy to recognize and appreciate the Beverly who threw herself into the Walk for Hunger and the Wednesday night supper, who was a fixture at Haley House and chronically unable to say 'no' to one more meal or another lonely person (on either side of the counter). She was the classic den mother, mother superior, mother confessor, and doting grandmother (probably her vocation of choice)—but these personages were only the most visible. Another level existed, and grew, and deepened, almost imperceptably.

It was toward the end when the cancer stole most of her energy. When the run-



House on Sundays and Monday battle the traffic on the Ex-Quincy and run her business kitchen. She gave hugs all a-me about giving out napkins twice the amount of meat I strongly believed that we 'ture'; the men deserved the committed to those in need-life.

She was a beautiful person, dedicated to helping people. She shared her smiles and joyed what might have eyes and feel her hug as I picture the kitchen door at the Haley ing. I hope to share that hug day. John Kerresey

energy, her exuberance—these were could get in the way of really

ning around, the 'doing' was no longer possible, the 'other' Beverly became more obvious. Not that she stopped for a minute taking care of every person around her - from doctors to visitors - but the consciousness with which she was engaged was easier to see. I watched as she passed around the ever-present photos of the grandchildren. Although each photo seemed to weigh 20lbs, each was treated as a precious relic (as indeed it was since her "vanity" prohibited 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 "seeing" that happens on the other side of death.

Kathe McKenna

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—262-5781.

THANKS

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 12 kilometers from where Ben Linder was murdered. One fifth of Cedro's 250 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 Tasua, 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. Handshakes 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 the freedom 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 contra or Sandinista. But I was totally unprepared for the stunning event that took place eight days later.

A second meeting was to be held; this time 30 contras were coming to the village. Along with three of us from the veteran's team and the Sandanista 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 justifiably 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 their 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 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)/CAEF



The Rooming House
 The personalist tradition we try to make our own encouraged us to not merely lament the loss of rooming houses, but to save at least one ourselves. In 1979 we became the owners of a building with 6 small units sharing baths, and 2 one bedroom apartments. Most importantly we have come to know and love the long-time residents. A spirit of independence and neighborliness characterizes the house.

John Leary House provides low income housing in the form of 5 one-bedroom units; three studios; 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.



The Soup Kitchen is open to homeless men 7 days each week serving breakfast and lunch. From 7AM - 1PM 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.

