

CATHOLIC



WORKER

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December, 2022

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Tom Cornell 1934-2022

By T. CHRISTOPHER CORNELL

I began this summer writing about hope, with a sense of relief that our collective medical issues were being held at bay (See CW June-July). New help had come along, and we were buoyed up by the enthusiasm of our young volunteers. But the weather turned brutally hot and dry, the volunteers left, and the summer changed drastically with the onset of drought. And on July 16, my parents' 58th wedding anniversary, my father, Tom, was admitted to the hospital. He died on August 1st.

My father's final days came in measured, but rapid steps. When he first became critically ill, we spent sixteen hours in the emergency room before seeing a doctor. Once he was attended to, the diagnosis of diverticulitis was competent and quick and my father was admitted. Our family mood was subdued but hopeful, since we had been through a few crises before. He was discharged—a little early, we thought, but he came home gratefully.

Once home he declined again, and we went back to the emergency room, this time for eighteen hours. The triage nurse brought out snacks and heated blankets, but there was no staff to see us or the other thirty people in the waiting room. My father had never been a good patient. But he endured the discomfort with uncharacteristic patience and surprising physical resilience. A strange bond formed in the waiting, as we realized that a couple of old friends were there, too, almost unrecognizable under the duress of pain and illness. This was one of the many graces showered upon us during this difficult time.

Expecting an eighty-eight year-old with a life-threatening condition to endure such a situation seems the height of insanity. But we waited in that combination of fear and hope. It was like a meditation—being fully present to the moment and to the needs of the other person. So much energy goes into just staying calm and attentive, praying for a good outcome, and being ready with the right information and attitude.

I thought of that Sunday's Gospel reading, the story of Martha and Mary from Luke 10, where Jesus had begun his journey to Jerusalem. Mary sat in witness at the feet of a man going to his passion. The message to me was clear: put aside any busyness at the farm. Just be here.

When my father was finally admitted again, an abscess was found in his intestine. A new concern rose: an aneurysm on his hepatic artery. Endoscopic surgery was the only option. Even at the hands of the hospital's most experienced surgeon, the expected forty-five minute procedure turned into a five-hour ordeal. Afterward, the surgeon said they had "pulled out every trick" and that the patient was stable in the recovery room. But a phone call in the middle of the night urged us to come to the ICU immediately, as my father had taken a turn for the worse.

The next few days were a blur of hurried phone calls, endless hours of waiting, intense communications and decisions. Time no longer seemed to function normally. Overnight vigils and rotating shifts underscored that we had entered a different reality. I remember having to stop in my tracks and shake my head and my hands, as if to get the ICU off of me after passing through its doors.

A feeding tube was installed and my father



Robert Hodgell

got stronger. The first day, he had groaned and thrashed as the anesthesia wore off. But the next morning, he could speak one-syllable words. A CT scan showed no major brain damage. By the end of the day he could form short sentences and respond to questions. But his blood pressure remained dangerously low. Then, the internal bleeding resumed. This is where the hardest stuff started. The doctors recommended changing the plan of care. Transfusions would only prolong his suffering. And they said we should consider him in the process of "actively dying."

When Covid-19 began in 2020, we had a very serious family meeting to discuss end of life choices. In typical, preemptory fashion, my father had declared, "I wish my care to be directed by the norms of the Catholic

Church!" As his health care proxy, I had the job of saying, "Well, what does that mean, exactly?" During the pandemic, it meant no artificial resuscitation, no intubation, no respirator. This time, things seemed less clear. He'd had the last rites, "extreme unction," and he was ready to go. What about simple nutrition, hydration, and antibiotics? I negotiated with the doctors not to put him into palliative care just yet. And started praying harder for a miracle.

Decades ago, my father had a prophetic dream. He was in a wheelchair, being pushed by our co-worker Kelly Johnson at St. Peter's Square in Rome for the canonization of Dorothy Day. Now, with the cause at its next phase in Rome, I said, "OK, God, how about a miracle? That's what you do with saints. If

you want Dorothy canonized, you couldn't ask for more." Medical science had reached its end. And I didn't want to be the one to rule out a miracle by moving too fast.

By the next day my father had weakened significantly. He required fewer painkillers, and it was a comfort to know that he was not all doped up. Nevertheless, he was no longer able to speak. He could no longer follow the breviary read by my mother and sister, repeating "Alleluia." His body was clearly shutting down.

But his spirit graciously stayed. He would wake from sleep, his eyes opening in slow-motion like a young baby's, and he would light up with a radiant, child-like smile every time he saw our faces, over and over again,

(continued on page 3)

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ST. JOSEPH HOUSE, 36 East First Street, New York, NY 10003—(212) 254-1640
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BOOK REVIEW

MARCHING TO A SILENT TUNE: A Journey From We Shall To Hell No by Gerald R. Gioglio. Acta Publications, Chicago, Illinois 2022. Reviewed by Bill Griffin.

This book is many things. On one level it is the author's memoir of a crisis of conscience when he was twenty over his participation in the US Army during the Vietnam War. On another plane it is a sociological portrait of US society during that destructive period. A third narrative gives an in-depth analysis of the ways in which basic military training is psychologically damaging. Finally, a fascinating fourth dimension could be characterized as theological. Quotations from classical religious figures and contemporary spiritual seekers introduce each of the forty short and crisply written chapters. They highlight a stage in Gioglio's moral maturing and ability to exercise his free will.

Growing up in New Jersey in a hardworking middle class family did not adequately prepare Gioglio to face great moral challenges. This is according to his own frank sociological assessment of the sense of conformity which prevailed. His generally wholesome family life nevertheless reflected commonly held prejudices such as anti-Black racism and homophobia. The Catholic Church also failed him by presenting Just War Theory as the whole of the teachings of Jesus. However, Gioglio's Catholic education is credited with introducing him to the Civil Rights Movement.

He describes the powerful impact of Father Leyh who directed the Catholic Youth Organization in his high school. Field trips with this priest gave students a clear education in the racist oppression that was being inflicted on African-Americans. In Gioglio's subtitle the "We Shall" refers to the great spiritual anthem, "We Shall Overcome" which was sung by thousands during marches for Civil Rights. His exposure to the nonviolent civil disobedience of Martin Luther King played a key role in his moral education.

Gioglio had completed two years of college when he left in order to marry. He was immediately drafted into the military in 1968, the height of the slaughter in Vietnam. Two years earlier, when he had registered with the Selective Service Administration, he had requested an application for conscientious objector status. However, he had not sent it in because he could not say that he was absolutely opposed to all war. All he was certain about was that he was against the war in Vietnam which the US government was mendaciously labelling a "police action." Selective conscientious objection was not recognized by military authorities at that time.

When he presented himself at the induction center he brought a written statement stating that he was, in conscience, opposed to the war in Vietnam. The military officer in charge browbeat him mercilessly, saying he could apply later. After a long harangue, Gioglio finally conceded and swore the oath of enlistment. Fifty-some years later he writes of this moral injury as follows: "I knew I needed to go down another road. Feeling distraught, dropping the ball, and in Christian terms, failing to pick up my cross, I finally muttered to the officer, 'Okay...okay, I'll affirm.'"

Once he was inducted he boarded a bus with fifty other youths and plunged into the maelstrom of Basic Military Training and Advanced Military Training. This was six months of grueling physical exercise, training in the use of all sorts of weapons and intense psychological abuse in that all orders were shouted or screamed. Gioglio recommends watching Stanley Kubrick's brilliant anti-war film, *Full Metal Jacket*, in order to get a sense of how dehumanizing and degrading military training can be.

The point of this abuse, which is very effective, is to inculcate blind instinctive obedience to all military orders. Referred to repeatedly as "grunts" and "maggots" by their superiors, simple soldiers are supposed to lose all sense of themselves as moral beings who have the free will to choose between right and wrong actions. Gioglio is honest about his own psychological regression to automatic obedience as he acquired the so-called "military mind" demanded by officers and sergeants. He confesses that he internalized the anger and violence that goes hand in hand with learning how to kill other human beings.

Then, Gioglio began to change. The loneliness and atomization he felt drove him to think deeply about the spiritual desert he now inhabited. The sense that mindless bloodlust was being rammed down his throat suddenly crystallized when a fellow recruit was badgered by a sergeant into tearing the head off of a live chicken. The sergeant then splashed the blood on all the troops standing around him.

Gioglio began to urgently query and debate with his fellows about the stupidity of the training to which they were all being subjected. A number of his comrades saw through the primitive nature of the training as clearly as he did, but were willing to put up with it. One, in particular, with whom Gioglio often argued, did so out of a sincere love of country. He later died in Vietnam and is one of those to whom Gioglio dedicates his book.

His new application for conscientious objector status was immediately refused and he was given orders for Vietnam. He refused

and everything became confrontational. He was placed in a restricted barracks with other in-service protesters against the war in Vietnam. He was harshly interviewed by a Catholic chaplain, a colonel no less, who became openly belligerent. When Gioglio tried again to base his claim for conscientious objection on his Catholic faith, the colonel said his ideas were "crap" and brusquely dismissed him. After many ups and downs and delays, Gioglio was finally told by his commanding officer that he would be discharged as a conscientious objector and receive an honorable discharge in spite of the fact that he had refused to be shipped to Vietnam.

Why this sudden favorable decision? All Gioglio can conclude after investigation is that, "The military was beginning to discharge many more conscientious objectors from their ranks. As the number of applications rose, so did the number of discharges, rising from 28% of the applications in 1967 and steadily rising to 77% in 1972. This suggests to me that the focus was on purging the ranks of the most vocal and active conscientious objectors." Whatever the real reason was, Gioglio is grateful that his own personal, "Hell No, We Won't Go!" anti-war cry was finally heard by the authorities.

Gerald Gioglio is the previous author of *Days of Decision: An Oral History of Conscientious Objectors in the Military During the Vietnam War*. See also his article entitled, "Good Friday Meditation" in the March-April 2018 issue of *The Catholic Worker*. He has taught sociology and worked for Catholic Charities and the New Jersey Department of Human Services. He is a father, as well as a member of the Secular Franciscan Order. This current work is another contribution to the building of a culture of peace.

Gioglio does not think that his book concerns just the Sixties. In fact, one can't help but think about today's conscientious objectors when one puts down this inspiring book. One also thinks of Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning, Reality Winner and Daniel Hale and all the many other resisters we do not hear about. Here, in conclusion, is part of what this modest author says about his intentions: "In weaving this account together, my mind often turns to those who are now in the military; those convinced they are doing their duty by being part of today's military operations from the Middle East to Ukraine to who knows where next. I especially think of those who find themselves in a position where, for reasons of conscience, they can no longer participate in the military or in war-making. I also assume that the military draft—this time for both women and men—my generation fought so hard to eliminate, may someday be brought back." ✨



The Annunciation

Brian Kavanagh

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Joanne Kennedy,
Managing Editor

Tom Cornell

1934-2022

(continued from page 1)

as if for the first time. He was entering the eternal now.

That night, I was on duty as he declined further, slowly. In the late hours, he started brushing his oxygen tube away. For hours, we played a gentle game where I would put his tube back, draping it close to his lips, and he would brush it away, smiling at me the whole time. Eventually, I could not fight him anymore and let him sleep.

In the morning, when my sister Deirdre took the next shift, I told her I was holding out for a miracle. She told me, "We've already had the miracle. His whole life has been a miracle." It was time to let go.

I told the nurse of our family's decision to cease all interventions. I headed immediately to Sunday Mass, where I was scheduled as lector. I got through the reading and then went to the pew to weep, as I already knew the Gospel from Luke 12 that was to come: "You fool, this very night your life will be required of you." But I also knew that it was not my father who was the fool, the rich farmer who had built the barn. It was I, it is all of us, when we hold on too closely to the treasure that is this life.

That night, the nurse Selena came on duty. It turned out that she and another nurse, Fernando, had been there the night my father came in to the ICU. She told me how hard they had worked on him that first night, and I realized she was telling me he would not have had these last few days without their efforts.

My sister and I stayed for the final shift together. Our mother, spent, went home to sleep. My father's breathing shifted. Selena assured us that it was simply the normal process of his body letting go. She gently and reverently turned off the monitors. They weren't needed any more. His breaths dropped from eleven at a time, to nine, and seven, and then six. It was like the embers of a fire, when the coals seem dark, but then lightly pulse with the last, tiny glimmers of heat as they recede. I dozed off, immersed in the rhythm of his breathing. At about 2:55 am, I woke to silence, realizing that the breathing had stopped. My sister was quietly sitting next to him. He had just slipped away.

My mother had spoken of a tradition of women washing the body after a death. It was a wish we were able to fulfill for her together, my sister and I. His death had been so gentle that the washing was easy, more an act of reverence than of grim necessity. We collected his breviary and rosary from Jerusalem and took leave of those two amazing nurses.

The funeral was powerful and beautiful, with carefully chosen readings and hymns, and a good bit of the old Latin thrown in. We are so grateful to the parish, St. Mary's Church in Marlboro, which also hosted a reception afterward, and to the many dear friends who came from far and near. My father came alive in the sharing of memories and testimonies.

This loss is so profound that I can scarcely understand what it means for the farm. On one hand, my father was the least involved with its practical affairs. Also, the burden of caretaking has been relieved. On the other hand, he was the engine for so many aspects of our work: writing and correspondence, welcoming visitors, and all those dealings with the outside world. Life seems smaller without him.

What is the work of the farm, anyway? In the beautiful early summer, my father had been integral to our time with the volunteers. At eighty-eight and eighty, Tom and Monica still provided dinner for them and spent the evenings in recollection, history, and discussion, the classic "clarification of thought" through which my father touched so many lives over so many years. It is a blessing to be in a community where the elderly are valued and can make incalculable contributions.

When my father would hear someone was ill, he used to say, "Pray for a speedy recovery or a happy death," claiming the saying came from monastic tradition. Later in life, as he

lost cherished friends, one by one, he would habitually say, "We have here no lasting city, no abiding home," quoting Hebrews. (He said he got that one directly from Dorothy).

The spiritual view of looking toward our heavenly home is inspiring, but I'm not quite there yet. I still wish I could have had the big miracle, the one that has him sitting in that wheelchair at St Peter's Square. Instead, I will have to take consolation in the many minor miracles—too many to recount here—that powerfully accompanied us in this harrowing but grace-filled time. The unspoken joy and gratitude that my father radiated in those last days were unforgettable. God moved mountains to provide a happy death for this extraordinary man. ✦

We Declare Peace

By TOM CORNELL

[Excerpted from *The Catholic Worker*, September 1965—Eds. Note]

The Peace Movement is escalating. Not enough to impede the military escalation in Vietnam, certainly, but enough to give the lie to President Johnson's claim of general consensus for his Vietnam policy, and enough to have evoked legislative response from the Senate and the House of Representatives.

On August 9th, nationwide television broadcast films of the largest mass arrest in the history of Washington, DC. Three hundred and sixty people, participants in the Assembly of Unrepresented People, attempted to march to the steps of the Capitol while the Congress was in session, to read a Declaration of Peace....

The Catholic Worker took an active part in the four days of demonstrations that led up to the mass arrest. On August 6th, Hiroshima Day, we gathered across the street from the White House in Lafayette Park, for addresses by Father Philip Berrigan, SSJ and about twenty peace leaders. We walked silently across the street, carrying with us a few placards announcing our purpose and our Declaration of Conscience, which many Catholic Worker readers had signed. There were over six thousand signatures on the Declaration; denouncing the violence in Vietnam and asserting that the signers would support civil disobedience in efforts to halt it.

Our announced purpose was to present these signed declarations to the President himself, and to demand that the President meet with all the signers present to discuss his Vietnam policy. We had started the day with a forty-minute silent vigil outside the White House fence. Some knelt, some sat and most stood, utterly silent, at least five hundred of us, in an extremely impressive vigil line. A very prayerful atmosphere, in which I am sure many were led to pray for the success of our four-day mission to Washington, for one another, that we might all have wisdom and courage, and for the people whom we had come to see and to move, that they might at long last hear the cries of people all over the world in their agony of violence and deprivation.

As we had expected, the President refused to see us. We were sorry to hear that his daughters were emotionally upset by our presence, just as the wife of Mayor Joe T. Smiterman had been upset by our presence in Selma. We sensed the bitter contrast of these sheltered and tender souls with the equally tender but less well-protected and sheltered women and children of Vietnam and our own South. Had we not seen films, just days before, of the United States Marines, protectors of democracy, in Vietnam putting a torch to an entire village? National television has been more candid than the President in reporting our operations in Vietnam. The officials call the victims Vietcong terrorists, but we see old men and women. They call their villages nerve centers for the guerrillas, but we see humble thatched cottages, the return for a lifetime's work in the rice fields, set afire by

Marines with flamethrowers and common pocket lighters.

We sat for two hours before the White House gate—Bradford Lytle holding the signed Declarations of Conscience, A. J. Muste seated. White House guards had provided a chair for A. J., who is over eighty years old, and brought him water, for the heat was intense. Joan Baez fanned my face with the summer issue of *The Catholic Worker*... The police made no arrests, and we were glad to be free to participate in the following days' activities....

Saturday and Sunday were devoted to workshops, discussions of the problems of poverty, racial injustice, war, the draft and conscientious objection, community organization, and preparation for convening the Assembly of Unrepresented People on the Capitol steps. Catholic Worker folk gathered at the home of Frank and Ann Spelts, near the center of the city. Frank and Ann accommodated nearly thirty people in their home and on the floor of Frank's office nearby. Mary Ruddy, Nicole d'Entremont and Chris Kearns organized the Chrystie Street people into a kitchen crew and assumed responsibility for feeding hundreds of demonstrators at Fellowship House every evening.

August 9th, Nagasaki Day, is also the day on which Franz Jägerstätter was beheaded for his refusal to serve in Hitler's army. It seemed appropriate to have a public Mass, the Mass for Peace, to commemorate both these events.... It became clear, however, that we could not have Mass in a church, so we gathered our friends together, some thirty of us, for Mass at the Spelts' apartment, said very simply and beautifully by a Benedictine priest who had come to participate in the weekend's activities. With this preparation, singing and sharing the bread and wine with each other, drawing the strength and the seriousness of purpose we needed for the day's work, we set out once again to the base of the Washington Monument to begin our march down the Mall to the Capitol.

Eight hundred of us, three abreast, made an impressive column, streaming from the Washington Monument down the Mall. We were singing "We Shall Overcome," the leaders Dave Dellinger, Staughton Lynd and Bob Parris at the head of the column, Vincent Martsky, Jim Wilson and I in back of them. Suddenly two men in the front ranks of our march jumped out of line and ahead of us. "Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil! Heil Hitler!" American Nazi infiltrators. They hurled two cans of red paint at us, filling Dellinger's eyes and splattering paint on demonstrators and reporters alike. Vince jumped to Dellinger's side to swab the paint out of his eye sockets. The police apprehended the Nazis, but apparently only after they were sure they had no more paint. No one broke step. We marched right along, slowly, deliberately, singing a little louder perhaps, but completely controlled.

We had been warned that we would be arrested if we attempted to pass Third Street. At First Street, two blocks past Third, the police tried to make it appear that they really



Rita Cornell

meant it this time. We passed beyond First. On the Capitol grounds we were effectively stopped by the police in a cul de sac. We sat, convened the Assembly, and read our Declaration of Peace.

For over an hour we sat, making it clear to the police that we wished to proceed to the Capitol steps.... We were now very closely packed in the front rows, right up against the police. They began lifting certain demonstrators and taking them to the wagons. Then they paused. It seemed that perhaps they were simply trying to thin out the crowd and take the leaders. Dellinger and Parris were gone. I noticed that they were taking those who stood to lead the singing, as one by one. Jim, Vince and I stood, turned our backs to the police, started clapping our hands and leading the freedom songs. As the police put their hands on us, we simply fell back and allowed ourselves to be carried to the police vans. Hundreds followed.

Newspaper and television coverage of these events was extraordinary. The Peace Movement cannot be ignored quite as completely as it has been in the past. Another indication of increasing effectiveness is the new legislation making it a federal offense punishable by five years' imprisonment and a ten-thousand dollar fine to burn one's draft card.

This is in part the result of a draft card burning at Whitehall Induction Center in New York pictured in *Life* magazine on August 20th, opposite a full-page color photograph of the paint-bespattered Dellinger and Lynd. There had been innumerable draft card burnings in the past, with no response. I burned mine in Washington Square during the Second World Wide General Strike for Peace, on coast-to-coast television. Then, Chris Kearns and I led a draft card burning in Union Square a year ago, with three FBI agents present. No reaction. Now the government is restive. Apparently we are getting somewhere, for the House rushed through this hysterical anti-draft-card-burning bill amid denunciations of draft-dodgers and beatniks, and the Senate followed soon after the President signed it into law on August 31st.

This means, of course, that we must have a public burning soon.... A public draft card burning might be appropriate.... The best way to prove the stupidity and the unenforceable character of a law which would jail a man for burning a scrap of paper is to break it, in large numbers, in demonstrations all over the United States. This would be an extremely dramatic and effective way of manifesting our moral revulsion at our nation's Vietnam Policy as well as crippling a foolish and immoral law. ✦

FRIDAY NIGHT MEETINGS

In keeping with Peter Maurin's recognition of the need for ongoing clarification of thought, we invite you to join us for our weekly Friday Night Meetings. The meetings are held at Maryhouse, 55 East Third St., between First and Second Avenues. Feel welcome to call and confirm the schedule (212) 777-9617. Masks will be available.

- Jan. 6.....Fran Geteles: Fighting to End Torture in New York.
- Jan. 13.....Guantanamo—Seventeen Years and Counting.
- Jan. 20.....Mindy Levokove with Expanding Table, Becca Graham and RHCC: An Evening of Music and Songs.
- Jan. 27.....Former *Catholic Worker* Editors' Roundtable.
- Feb. 3.....Padraig O'Tuama: An Evening of Poems About Prayer and Protest.
- Feb. 10.....Brendan Fay: Remembering Mychal—Priest of 9/11 Screening and Discussion.
- Feb. 17.....Neil Smith: A Goodbye To Rita and Charlie or How to Get to the Catholic Worker.
- Feb. 23.....Fr. Ray Roden: Caryl Houselander—Prophetic Personalism Even Now.

MEETINGS BEGIN AT 8:00 PM

US Drones Deliver Death

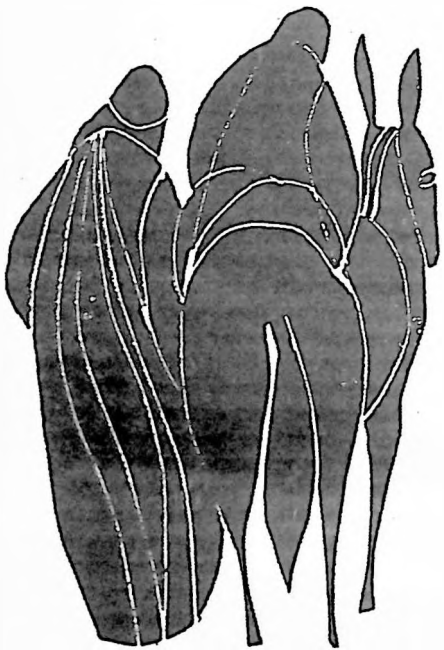
By KATHY KELLY and
NICK MOTTERN

Awaiting discharge from a hospital in Cairo, Adel Al Manthari, a Yemeni civilian, faces months of physical therapy and mounting medical bills following three surgeries since 2018, when a US weaponized drone killed four of his cousins and left him mangled, burnt and barely alive, bedridden to this day.

On October 7th, President Biden announced, through Administration officials briefing the press, a new policy regulating US drone attacks, purportedly intended to reduce the numbers of civilian casualties from the attacks.

Absent from the briefings was any mention of regret or compensation for the thousands of civilians like Adel and his family whose lives have been forever altered by a drone attack. Human rights organizations like the UK-based Reprieve have sent numerous requests to the US Department of Defense and the State Department, seeking compensation to assist with Adel's medical care, but no action has been taken. Instead, Adel and his family rely on a Go Fund Me campaign called "Save the Legs & Life of a US Drone Attack Victim." Adel's supporters are now begging for more assistance to pay for crucial physical therapy plus household expenses for Adel and two of his sons, his primary caregivers during the extended stay in Egypt. The family struggles with precarious finances, yet the Pentagon budget seemingly can't spare a dime to help them.

Writing for the *New York Review of Books*, (September 22, 2022), Wyatt Mason described the Lockheed Martin Hellfire 114 R9X, nicknamed the "ninja bomb," as an air-to-surface, drone-launched missile with a top speed of 995 miles per hour. Carrying no explosives, the R9X purportedly avoids collateral damage. As *The Guardian* reported in September 2020, "The weapon uses a combination of the force of 100 lbs of dense material flying at high speed and six attached blades which deploy before impact to crush and slice its victims."



Rita Corbin

Adel was attacked before the ninja bomb was in more common use. Indeed, it is unlikely that he would have survived had his attackers hit the car he and his cousins were traveling in with the barbaric weapon designed to slice up their broken bodies. But this would be small comfort to a man who recalls the day when he and his cousins were attacked. The five of them were traveling by car to examine a real estate proposition for the family. One of the cousins worked for the Yemeni military. Adel worked for the Yemeni government. None of them were ever linked to non-governmental

terrorism. But somehow they were targeted. The impact of the missile which hit them instantly killed three of the men. Adel saw, with horror, the strewn body parts of his cousins, one of whom was decapitated. One cousin, still alive, was rushed to a hospital where he died days later.

The Biden administration seems keen to depict a kinder, gentler form of drone attacks, avoiding collateral damage by using more precise weapons like the ninja bomb and assuring that President Biden himself orders any attacks waged in countries where the United States is not at war. The "new" rules actually continue policies set up by former President Obama.

Annie Shiel, of the Center for Civilians in Conflict, says the new lethal force policy entrenches the previous policies. "The new lethal force policy is also secret," she writes, "preventing public oversight and democratic accountability."

President Biden can confer upon himself the power to kill other human beings anywhere in the world because he has determined, as he said after he ordered the drone assassination of Ayman al-Zawahiri, "If you are a threat to our people, the United States will find you and take you out."

Martin Sheen, noted for his portrayal of US President Josiah Bartlet on the TV series "The West Wing," has provided the voice-over for two fifteen-second cable spots critical of US drone warfare. The spots can be heard at BanKillerDrones.org. In both spots, Sheen, who has a long history of opposing war and human rights violations, notes the tragedy of civilians killed overseas by US drones. As images of press reports about drone operator suicides roll, he asks: "Can you imagine the unseen effects on the men and women who operate them?"

Humanity faces rising perils of climate catastrophe and nuclear weapon proliferation. We need fictive voices like that of Sheen's West Wing president and the very real, albeit sidelined, leadership of people like Jeremy Corbyn in the UK:

"Some say to discuss peace at a time of war is a sign of some kind of weakness," Corbyn writes, noting "the opposite is true. It is the bravery of peace protesters around the world that stopped some governments from being involved in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, or any of the dozens of other conflicts going on. Peace is not just the absence of war; it is real security. The security of knowing you will be able to eat, your children will be educated and cared for, and health services will be there when you need them. For millions, that is not a reality now; the after-effects of the war in Ukraine will take that away from millions more. Meanwhile, many countries are now increasing arms spending and investing resources in more and more dangerous weapons. The United States has just approved its biggest-ever defense budget. These resources used for weapons are all resources not used for health, education, housing or environmental protection. This is a perilous and dangerous time. Watching the horror play out and then preparing for more conflicts in the future will not ensure that the climate crisis, poverty crisis, or food supply is addressed. It's up to all of us to build and support movements that can chart another course for peace, security, and justice for all."

The current lineup of world leaders seems incapable of leveling with their people about the consequences of pouring money into military budgets which then allow so-called defense corporations to profit from weapon sales worldwide, fueling forever wars and unleashing legions of lobbyists to assure that government officials continue feeding the greedy, barbaric corporate missions of outfits like Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, Boeing and General Atomics.

We must follow the bright lights arrayed across the world as grassroots movements campaign for environmental sanity and seek to abolish war. And we must steadily engage in efforts to tell Adel Al Manthari we're sorry, we're so very sorry, for what our countries have done to him, and we earnestly wish to help. ❖

Little Amal Walks New York

By CATHY BREEN

I was completely taken in by her as she gently tried to turn the iconic Cube at Astor Place on her way to Washington Square Park. Surrounded by many others, she had all of us mesmerized by her big eyes, expressive gestures, bending down toward and, somehow, embracing each person. She did this with a grace that is impossible to articulate. One forgets that she is a puppet.

Although she is twelve feet high, she is called "Little Amal." Amal means hope in Arabic. Little Amal represents a ten year-old girl from the Aleppo area of Syria, an area I am somewhat familiar with, having stayed there on more than one occasion with refugee families who fled Iraq. Aleppo was brutally hit during the conflict in Syria.

Little Amal's story is that she was separated from her family in a refugee camp. For the last year and a half she has been on a journey, traveling around the world searching for her family. She was on a seventeen-day trip through the five boroughs of NYC as part of a theater project to raise awareness about refugee children. "When we talk about migration and refugees, we tend to forget that more than half the people we're talking about are children," said the artistic director of Little Amal Walks NYC, Amir Nizar Zunabi.

Little Amal must have known that I needed hope. Two members of my Catholic Worker community must have sensed this as well, as they urged me to go out and see her as she was walking right through our neighborhood one evening. I can't get her image out of my mind.



Sally Elliot

When You Were Strangers

By BERNARD CONNAUGHTON

"Now when there sojourns with you a sojourner in your land, you are not to maltreat him; Like the native born among you shall he be to you...be loving to him (as one) like yourself. For sojourners were you in the land of Egypt...I am YHWH your God!"

Leviticus 19: 33-34

"Make a sign with *migrantes* written on it," the volunteer coordinator told me before I went to meet the Megabus from Texas on 34th St. late one Saturday night. Ten migrants—men, women and children—gathered around me as they disembarked, but not until a Spanish speaking volunteer arrived was the confusion about where to go for the night cleared up. I rode in an Uber with six adults to the city-run shelter across town.

Since spring, tens of thousands of migrants have arrived in New York City in buses, mostly from Texas. Though there is no official advance notification about when the buses will arrive, for months from 6am to 11pm these migrants have been welcomed on 34th St. and at Manhattan's Port Authority Bus Terminal by Team TLC—a group of volunteers who offer food, clothing, and transportation for the newly arrived asylum seekers. After intake at a city shelter, people are sent to other shelters, churches, synagogues and hotels. The city is constructing huge tents on Ward's Island in the East River to provide additional shelter for the migrants—sparking a controversy as winter approaches.

I have been flooded with memories. One is of a fourteen year-old boy, Mohammed, whose father and physical therapist brought to visit me on my trip to Iraq in 2013. When he was six years-old, he stepped on an electrical wire downed by a US bomb on this way home from school. He lost both arms and legs. "Can you help him get a prosthetic arm" his father asked? This boy no longer spoke. He could not hug anyone, scratch or feed himself. I showed his picture when giving talks in the States. I tried to get help for him. I still think of him. This boy will forever be engraved in my mind and heart.

I am a cause and effect person. Mohammed has no arms and legs because of war, because of what we did in his country. No country drops bombs on us, maiming us, causing us to flee our homes, livelihoods and country. Our war is much more insidious. We are exploding from within, and have been for many years. Mass shootings in schools, supermarkets, places of worship; racially motivated killings; deaths by suicide, especially among teens and veterans; opioid deaths and the list goes on and on.

Weaponry is our biggest industry. There have been many years of waging war on innocent people, many years of killing, maiming and creating refugees and then denying them entry to the US. Iraq and Afghanistan bear tragic witness to this. Amal doesn't speak with words. But she says volumes. She wasn't able to turn the Cube at Astor Place, but perhaps she can turn our hearts to welcome the stranger. ❖

Many of the asylum seekers are from Venezuela, and there are questions about why Immigration and Customs Enforcement has different policies for different countries. One of the coordinators from Team TLC told me that some migrants have been beaten and robbed in the shelter system. The greatest need she said is "to fix the broken shelter system" and make affordable housing a reality.

Migrants arrive with very little—a backpack, a small bag. Coming from a tropical climate, many have arrived unprepared for the colder weather. Some have come to our Catholic Worker houses seeking warmer clothing and shoes. I met a man who had walked to Maryhouse from Queens, several miles away, only to find that all the clothing had been given away. Recently neighbors have been donating clothes in response to the need.

It is striking how emphatic the Hebrew Scriptures are about the duty to love the sojourner, the stranger. This duty is mentioned no less than thirty-six times. Our very faith is rooted in the example of Abraham who left his home and family at God's behest. As Mary Lathrop reminded me, Jesus, Mary and Joseph were also sojourners in the land of Egypt when the political situation in Palestine became life-threatening for them.

The Bible calls us to remember, to never forget, and somehow to love those who are strangers in our land, and perhaps all those who are different from ourselves. ❖

Teach Your Children Well

By AMY SHAW

This past summer, anticipating the release of Wendell Berry's *The Need To Be Whole*, I read his shorter 1970 book, *The Hidden Wound*. It is a deeply personal and honest description of how slavery and racism have damaged every person, place, and community in the United States, from the obvious violence and disregard for human life to the still present disdain for physical labor and the disavowal of the land. For me, one of the most memorable chapters in *The Hidden Wound* concerns Berry's belief that it is a moral obligation to maintain "a continuity, a vital connection, between childhood vision and adult experience." Because it strikes me as such a devastating and convincing critique of US society, I'd like to quote at length from chapter nine.

"To me, the great power that children possess is candor; they see the world clear eyed, without prejudice; honesty is not immediately conceived by them as an uncomfortable alternative to lying. On the contrary, the tactics of deceit are customarily given a high priority in the training of a child. What white Americans call manners and social conventions consist very largely of such tactics. A child is, as we say, impressionable, and acts directly on the basis of his experience. If a person is lovable or respectable, a child will love or respect him without first asking his class or his race or his income.

"In a racist society, the candor of a child is therefore extremely threatening. That is also true of a puritanical society, as witness St. Paul, the genius of puritanism: 'When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man I put away childish things.'

"This is perhaps why racism and puritanism have meshed so perfectly in the United States. To both the racist and the puritan, childhood is not a time of life that we grow out of, as the life of the child grows out of the life of the parent or as a plant grows out of the soil, but a time *and a state of consciousness* to be left behind, to cut oneself off from." (Emphasis is Wendell Berry's.)

Of course, the danger a child poses to a corrupt society is central to the story of Jesus' birth, notably as told in *Matthew* 2:1-3. "After his birth astrologers from the East arrived in Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We observed the rising of his star, and we have come to pay him homage.' King Herod was greatly perturbed when he heard this, and so was the whole of Jerusalem."

Putting aside questions of historical accuracy, I find certain details of Matthew's story somewhat peculiar. For one thing, we're told that all of Jerusalem—not only the current ruler—was disturbed by news of a newborn king. For another, whether Herod functions as historical figure or literary device in Matthew's telling, he is certainly understood to be an old man. Indeed, he dies while Jesus is still a child.

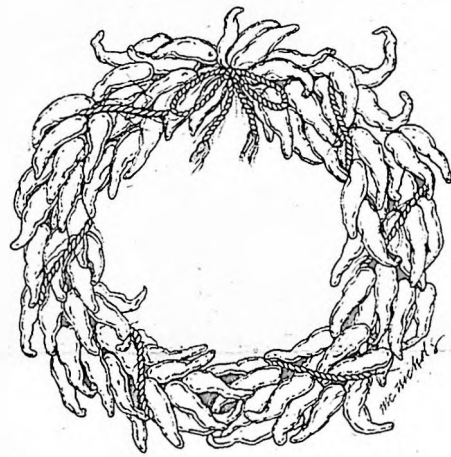
"After Herod's death an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said to him, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who threatened the child's life are dead.'"

Nearing the end of his life, what did Herod think he had to fear? How long did he expect to rule, that a newborn baby felt threatening? Perhaps his fears mirror our own fears of each successive generation. Fear that the structures we've spent our adult lives building or maintaining, however ambiguous their value, will be torn asunder. Perhaps a fear, rational or not, that one's own children will be denied the inheritance we've prepared for them, or more likely, denied the same advantages we might have profited from all our lives.

Maybe for us, living in a constantly and rapidly changing world in which social and cultural upheaval is the rule, the fear is more personal. Generational divides are, after all, nearly completely arbitrary. Major conflicts—the World Wars, the Vietnam War, the Cold

War, the War on Terror—these leave their mark on the young people who lived through them, but there are no tectonic shifts in the human condition and character, no great leaps in human evolution. For at least the past century, every generation coming of age has flaunted its irreverence for the world they were consigned to. Maybe our fear of the young is really fear of ourselves, fear of our own youthful impulsivity, perhaps guilt for the ideals we've surrendered as we've grown older.

Paradoxically, while we fear the young and train our children (as Berry elucidates) in deceit, we also tend to place on them the burden of our hopes for the future. After all, who else is there? We are, presumably, too set in our ways. I've struggled to reconcile this contradiction to myself. The best answer I can give, inadequate as it may be, is that our hopes are indeed genuine—hopes for peace, justice, a healthy land and people—but we insist on impressing upon our young prescribed ways of realizing those hopes. Perhaps it is when those sanctioned means are inevitably rejected that fear takes hold of us.



Chile Wreath

William Hart McNichols

Of course, it's far too simplistic to treat any generation, young or old, as a monolithic force in society. Within each, there are a variety of perspectives, often treated as monoliths themselves. As Wendell Berry writes in *The Need To Be Whole*:

"To those who identify themselves by political category, every person is a representative person. To liberals, all conservatives are the same, are committed to the same bad causes, and are describable by the same adjectives. To conservatives, liberals are similarly homogeneous, and equally objectionable. Each political side readily supposes that everybody on the other side is perfectly in agreement, focused entirely on politics, and forever collaborating and conspiring for unconditional victory."

Today, we see young people on both sides of this political divide. Much attention has been focused on climate and racial justice protests, particularly (and unfairly) when some form of property destruction is involved. On the other end of the spectrum, we've witnessed the participation of many young people in racist riots like those in Charlottesville, as well as racist, antisemitic and homophobic mass shootings and murders. Outside of media scrutiny, however, we see much greater diversity among young people. Even restricting ourselves to organizations that serve the poor, we see young people sustaining new and old Catholic Worker communities, anarchist mutual aid groups like Food Not Bombs, communist collectives like For The People, as well as both church-sponsored and corporately sponsored pantries and soup kitchens.

Perhaps this vast intragenerational variety—the good, the evil, and the less easily categorized—is reason to reject Berry's assumption that children "see the world clear eyed, without prejudice." Reason, perhaps, to reject any distinction between the character of children and the character of adults. This

is a major theme in the writing of Robertson Davies. In *The Rebel Angels*, he writes:

"What really shapes and conditions and makes us is somebody only a few of us ever have the courage to face: and that is the child you once were, long before formal education ever got its claws into you—that impatient, all-demanding child who wants love and power and can't get enough of either, and who goes on raging and weeping in your spirit till at last your eyes are closed and all the fools say, 'Doesn't he look peaceful?' It is those pent-up, craving children who make all the wars and all the horrors and all the art and all the beauty and discovery in life, because they are trying to achieve what lay beyond their grasp before they were five years old."

Far from being a moral obligation to maintain a connection between childhood and adulthood, this view deems that connection, for

better or worse, inescapable. I'm sure there is a large kernel of truth to this; certainly, we've all withstood peers who made growing up difficult for us. Even so, I'm desperate to believe that we all start from a place of sincerity, from a time when we knew right and wrong and hadn't yet muddled it with excuses and selfish justifications. That's not because I want to dump the burden of the future on the young, to ask them to succeed where the rest of us have failed. Rather, I want to believe that there is a seed of honesty and moral clarity within each of us, that we are still capable of growth at any stage in life. I trust that young people, today and in years to come, know what they're doing, but the rest of us have a responsibility to clear the way—not to steer their path, but to free them from the burdens of debt, overwork, poverty, incarceration—so that they have the freedom to explore, create and choose for themselves. ✚

St. Charles de Foucauld

By ANDREAS KNAPP

[Reprinted with permission from *Plough Quarterly* (No. 32: Hope in Apocalypse). Translated by Chris Zimmerman from *Wer alles gibt, hat die Hände frei: Mit Charles de Foucauld einfach leben lernen* by Dromer Knauer, 2021—Eds. Note]

Declared a saint by Pope Francis in May 2022, Charles de Foucauld (1858–1916) was the scion of a long line of wealthy French noblemen. After the early death of his parents, he followed in the footsteps of his forebears, as expected of him, and embarked on a military career. Influenced by a milieu that held a dim view of religious belief, he also spent lavishly, burning through his inheritance and becoming notorious for his dissolute lifestyle. Pleasure-seeking did not satisfy him, however, and he was dogged by an inner emptiness. A tour of military duty and a subsequent geographical research expedition in the Algerian Sahara (at that time a part of France's colonial empire) turned him—to the astonishment of his peers—from party animal to desert fox. Back in Paris, he was welcomed as a dashing adventurer; inwardly, he was churning. What had happened?

For one thing, he had witnessed Muslims praying in Morocco—a sight that deeply impressed him and now drew him to the Church. Fortunately, the clear-sighted priest to whom de Foucauld turned recognized that the young man in front of him was not facing an intellectual dilemma but an existential decision. In the course of ongoing conversations, the priest invited de Foucauld to confess his sins and put his life into God's hands.

De Foucauld was deeply moved by this experience and later spoke of it as a vital turning point in his life. In line with his tendency to commit himself to something completely or not at all, he sought entry to a Trappist monastery in Syria—a poor community in a famously strict order. As he explained the decision to Henri Duveyrier, the well-known explorer with whom he had traveled North Africa: "Why did I join the Trappists? Out of love—pure love. I love our Lord and cannot bear to live any other life than this. I cannot travel first-class while the one I love went through it in the last."

A few years later, after witnessing the massacre of local Syrian Christians on the orders of the Turkish sultan (he and his fellow French monks were left unharmed), de Foucauld found himself longing for a different way to follow Christ. If God, in God's love for humankind, had taken on the form of a man and chosen the downward path of poverty, shouldn't he—in solidarity with that man, Jesus—stand with the poor and powerless too?

In 1897, leaving the security of the monastery, he moved to Nazareth, in Palestine. Here, in this unassuming village, he sought to come nearer to an understanding of the Incarnation—the mystery of a God who had chosen to live as a simple craftsman among ordinary people as they went about their daily lives.

Pleased to be so close to his beloved Lord, both geographically and inwardly, de Foucauld found work as a house servant at a convent of the Poor Clares. Meanwhile, he spent long hours contemplating the Gospels and meditating on Christ's presence in the Eucharist. This form of devotion had always deeply moved him. To think that God would make himself so small as to offer himself up as a humble piece of bread!

Eventually, he came to the realization that he could live in the manner of the Man of Nazareth anywhere—and that he must do so where he could be of greatest service to others. Not surprisingly, in accordance with his "logic" of the Incarnation, he was drawn to the poorest of the poor. He longed to be a brother to them—to assure those whom the world despised that God had not forgotten them, and to share their fate.

In 1901, de Foucauld returned to the Sahara and the Tuareg, a tribe that lived on the margins of the world known to Europeans at that time, with virtually no knowledge of Western civilization or Christianity. He would spend the next fifteen years with them, accepting their bare-bones standard of living and offering hospitality and care to the poor and sick. He also immersed himself in their culture, learning their language and studying their traditions.

De Foucauld often dreamed of calling other brothers to join him in his work—he envisioned founding a community modeled on the one that sprang up around Jesus and His disciples. But this dream was not to be realized, at least not during his lifetime. For one thing, his clerical superiors, unsettled by his tendency to "absolutize" ideals such as self-denial and the renunciation of family ties, dissuaded him from recruiting followers. For another, the handful who joined him anyway soon discovered that his ascetic lifestyle was all but inimitable. As the old saying goes, "A saint is a wonderful person, as long as you don't have to live with him."

On December 1, 1916, against the backdrop of regional unrest generated by World War I, de Foucauld was kidnapped and shot by bandits. And yet his legacy lives on. De Foucauld's memory was kept alive by a Catholic association he had helped to organize, and popularized by a bestselling 1921 biography. Communities formed that sought to promote his theological insights and put them into practice. While the first of these groups arose in his native France, others have emerged elsewhere in the intervening century, among them the Little Sisters and Little Brothers, also known as the Communities of Charles de Foucauld. Inspired by his life, and what he called the "spirit of Nazareth," they choose to live in voluntary poverty among the poor, and to serve the "hidden Christ" as He is found on the margins of society—in prisons, depressed urban areas, refugee centers and other places of despair. ✚

From the Book of Notes

By RIC RHETOR

We don't think this December column should be cast as an "end of the year round up," or "the best (or worst!) of 2022." Cliché phrases like that could make an already exhausted late night writer lose face, literally, as eyelids begin to sag and the head makes its involuntary journey toward the surface of the desk.

So what should we call these entries in "The Book of Notes?" Perhaps just a small Christmas gift, intended to make folks laugh? But not only that, also to make readers think, and pray, but with a lightness that some may consider too trivial for an august read like the CW.



Sally Elliott

It's been great to reopen our city houses after the almost two and a half year Covid-19 shutdown—food is being served inside again, our Friday Night Meetings are back and we are glad indeed! Our first meeting after a long absence was more a welcome back and a sharing between our own crew and those who attended from outside the houses, mostly neighbors and friends from the city. Our in-house volunteers around for the duration of the lockdowns included Bud, Phil, Chichun and many others. Carmen was in jail for part of those Covid-19 days and brought us vivid scenes from Otisville Federal Prison Camp, not too far from NYC, where Carmen volunteered for bathroom clean-up duty.

Meanwhile, in Downstate NY, the home fires and fans were kept in service at both St. Joe's and Maryhouse. The soup line numbers at St. Joe's reached the corner and at Maryhouse women and kids could enjoy the comfort of a protective canopy outside, especially welcome on some of those sweltering hot days we sweated through last summer. That canopy is otherwise kept in the Maryhouse auditorium where Felton, Amy, Bernie, Trevor, Ben, Abbi, Joanne, Bill G. and others carry it down a set of stairs and out the front door, in a magnificent display of team prowess or, as Peter Maurin would have it, "a common unity of a community." So many folks who help us with the daily Works of Mercy deserve big shout-outs—thinking here especially of Angela and knowing we will have left out many who deserve a round of applause for giving us a hand in the most arduous days of Covid-19.

And speaking of those at the ready to serve, how 'bout that Bernie, who comes each Friday—few words, much work, a gifted toilet cleaner and, like others here, a hero of the revolution for his willingness to make life a bit easier for others. Not too long ago, for instance, Jane was in a bit of a "situation," as

Steve would put it, when the good natured worker/scholar asked if she needed a hand. Suddenly, in a gesture of great compassion, Bernie set before her a beautifully crafted, wood carved hand—that was all—no arm attached. Spurning any potential praise that Jane might have been ready to give him, he turned quickly and walked away. Seems it was part of a costume jewelry display that came in as a donation on its way to a hearty laugh.

With the return of our Friday Night Meetings, there have been some great reunions taking place afterwards over a cuppa tea and a few cookies. Wonderful to have our old friend and great inspiration Jim Joyce, SJ who came down from Fordham to talk about the history of nonviolence, the creation myths of Ireland, as well as the myths about some of the troubles there being a Protestant vs. Catholic conflict. For some it was an eye opener on a history often trivialized. And it was a great opportunity to see some of the crowd from the Bronx, where Jim lives as well as so many of our BICs (Bronx Irish Catholics)—among them Eileen Markey, Miriam Ford and Colleen Kelly. A good bunch, they have been involved in all sorts of causes, from Central American solidarity to post 9/11 Peaceful Tomorrows.

Eileen's written a wonderful book, *A Radical Faith*, about Sister Maura Clarke, one of the thousands of people killed in El Salvador, and one of four US churchwomen who were killed on the day that Dorothy Day was buried, the 2nd of December, 1980. This is their feast day, their "Roses in December." For Miriam Ford, her family and all those killed in war we ask God's blessings. Couldn't help but think of Chuck Schumer's frustrated comment shortly after January 6th, 2021, about our country being "like a third world country." It's not as if our government has not sent enormous amounts of military aid to dictatorships in many parts of the world helping to overthrow elected governments.

Sally Smith, who was married by Tom Cornell, has been joining us for work around Maryhouse, including working on the mailing of our newspaper. She joins the crew of Carla, Cathy and Bill G. and she couldn't come at a better time, bringing with her a very friendly attitude. We have also met Mary, a new Tuesday morning volunteer at Maryhouse who brings her good cheer and helpful hands.

And for you Gin Blossoms fans out there, we were delighted to have an October visit from bass player Bill Leen along with his wife and daughter. They came bearing hammentashen and coconut macaroons, so those who missed it can be heard singing "Hey Jealousy," a favorite of Carla, Joanne and the soul of a woman named Domino.

In his lesser known work *Our Malady: Lessons in Liberty from a Hospital Diary*, Yale historian, Timothy Snyder, talks about his serious illness during the time of Covid-19. He writes that his weakness during that illness brought him closer to people. "I paid attention to things I might have overlooked like the words in front of churches as Christmas drew near. An announcement board in downtown New Haven asked whether this Christmas we mean to celebrate one migrant family and separate, detain and deport the rest.... That summoned the story of Mary and Joseph and the difficult story of a pregnant woman who gave birth far from home.... The comparison of their plight to the undocumented migrants in nearby detention centers hit me harder



Kate Cowley

than I would have expected."

It is amazing to think how much has changed since then, but the welcome folks are receiving now is not exactly warm. One day in October a family arrived at Maryhouse, with three children in tow and one on the way,

looking for clothing for the family. They had been in the US for nine days. May the Holy Family bless all who travel far from home seeking safety, and touch the hearts of those of us who take it for granted. ✪



Ade Bethune

Catholic Teaching & Labor

By ALFRED BASTONE

The Marymount School of New York is run by a Catholic women's religious order whose constitution proclaims "that Jesus Christ has come that all may have life." The school prides itself in developing a curriculum and relationship to the community grounded in the pursuit of social justice. "Marymount awakens in its students a consciousness of social justice.... Students begin to understand the roots of injustice and how they can address the challenges many communities face."

When the Marymount School of New York partnered with Triton Construction for their new school, they chose a model of exploitation over opportunity that contradicts the Catholic commitment to human dignity. On April 11, 2022, Laborers' Local 79 raised the alarm about Triton Construction's subcontracting with Construction Force Services. After two weeks of unsuccessful attempts at dialogue with the headmistress at Marymount, we began to engage the school and broader community to alert them to the issues of exploitation playing out at this site.

Construction Force Services is a "body shop." Body shops are subcontracted employers who supply labor for a general contractor. These businesses make money by renting the labor of their workers to general contractors at a huge mark up. Body shops hire and pay laborers, often former prisoners, to work for third party companies while taking a cut of each worker's wages. Laborers are typically paid minimum wage, or less, with no benefits. Body shops do not ensure the safety of their employees on site who often lack necessary safety equipment. Some employees are former prisoners, whose condition of release depends on maintaining employment. They are often hesitant to report unsafe work conditions at worksites for fear of reprisal. Body shops allow a general contractor to exploit employees through a third party.

Construction Force is like the thief in the Gospel of John who comes to only steal, kill and destroy, whereas the Good Shepherd seeks to care and protect the workers. Body shop workers cannot have a full life when their wages do not cover the cost of rent and they are not offered adequate health insurance nor retirement benefits. Body shops are parasitic, preventing the full flourishing potential of the workers they employ. A full life is impossible for workers to achieve when

institutions allow the use of body shops like Construction Force.

Laborers' Local 79 is a social justice union. We fight to give voice and power to workers who are often unseen and exploited. We hoped Marymount would be in alignment with us. Local 79 partners with community-based organizations to demand work with dignity for working class New York. Laborers' Local 79 has been at the forefront of uncovering and combating the body shop model in the construction industry. We championed the passage of Intro 2138, a transparency bill which sheds light on the exploitation which is an inherent part of body shop practices.

The Church and its institutions are morally bound by the social teachings they espouse. These principals can only be achieved when the Church lives out these values, ensuring that workers receive a living wage and benefits which sustain their families and the right to join a union. The protections and benefits of union membership for workers are rights the Church has long recognized and should be respected. Catholic Social Teaching on workers is clear in *Gaudium et spes*. Among the basic rights of the human person is the right to belong to a union. Pope Francis has said that the world should consider how it views wages as consuming the dignity of the human person. He argues for an alternative to the "tyranny of money." The remedies to this are the workers' right to join and form unions. His predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, criticized conservative Catholics in the US opposed to unions, saying that the social teachings in *Rerum novarum* are more applicable today than ever.

We call on the Catholic community to stand with Local 79 in the demand that faith be matched with works in New York City. In this city real estate is king, rents are overly burdensome, and inequality has been magnified by the pandemic. No construction worker should be paid less than twenty-five dollars per hour. No construction worker should labor without employer paid health insurance in an industry where twenty-four percent of all workplace fatalities occur. No construction worker should labor without a retirement benefit in performing work which takes the heaviest toll on the human body. We call on the Catholic community to join us as we demand jobs with dignity and justice. ✪

A Penny For Your Thoughts

By CHARLIE ÉNUPH

I am a Catholic Worker. And I am concerned. As far as I see it, the legacy of Dorothy Day, our model and co-founder, is on the chopping block. This is not about her canonization, but instead something much more serious—the growing movement to abolish the penny.

If you laughed at that last line, I am going to have to request that you fold up this paper and look in the top corner and read to yourself the price of the paper you are holding. Yeah, that's right "1¢." Can you imagine a world where that "1¢" was changed to "5¢"? That is what would happen according to the growing movement to abolish the penny. The dollar's lowest currency would go from the iconic penny to the chunky nickel. Now faithful reader, for another task, I must also implore you to go to your nearest bookshelf and get out the famous collection of articles from the CW newspaper, titled "A Penny a Copy." If you do not have a copy you can buy one (not for a penny) from Orbis Books (payment for advertising is still pending). What kind of title is a "A Nickel a Copy?" So clunky! So ugly! To those in the abolish penny movement I scream to the heavens: "You know not what you are doing!" The legacy of Dorothy Day, as I see it, is inherently tied to the completely necessary survival of the penny.

Again: I am a Catholic Worker. And I am concerned. So, I did what any concerned person does with the one cent dilemma we are facing. I got in contact with Big Zinc. I emailed Tom Wennogle, CEO of the Jarden Zinc company, who heads the largest zinc company and the largest zinc production interest lobby in the country. Our faithful servant Wennogle, through the Jarden Zinc lobby, can be estimated to have given \$2.6 million dollars in pro-penny lobbying since he took the helm of the company in 2009. I know, reader, when I first saw that number my jaw dropped. My brow started sweating and I screamed to myself: "Is that all? The penny and our legacy are worth more than that!" Although I have not received a reply from Wennogle, hopefully because he is hard at work fighting off the nickel lobbyists who are trying to destroy our sacred penny, I assured him that we at the Catholic Worker houses throughout the country have his back. Not only in the sphere of public penny discourse, but also as an underground network of anarchists ready to rise up at any moment for the life of the penny.



Joan Hymne

As a Catholic Worker who is concerned, I could not simply stop with a lone un-responded-to email. Dorothy Day's legacy may be heavily wrapped up in the delightful penny, but it is also wrapped up in the Catholic Worker's ability to never stop fighting for what is right. I must admit at this point that I was a little

lost. My second step forward was not as clear as my first, but then it came to me walking around the Lower East Side. Surely, there are other operations that must be pro-penny? What about all the "99¢ Stores" around the city, let alone the country? How much do you think they would have to fork over to change all of their signs to the "95¢ Store"? Shall I not mention our city's beloved "99¢ Pizza"? Yet another innocent victim that Big Nickel has refused to think about. I gathered a long list of every "99¢ Store" in the metropolitan area and sent out a letter warning them of the coming penny destruction. Have they even been warned? Have they been asked their opinion? Is Big Nickel teaming up with Big Canopy Label to take down the penny? Whatever happened to democracy? I then sent an accompanying email to the two big dollar store chains in the country, Dollar General and Dollar Tree, asking them to make public statements in support of the penny even though it does not directly affect their respective businesses.

Throughout this entire fight, I kept feeling remorse at the lack of support that I have been receiving. Was Tom Wennogle not intrigued by the thought of teaming up with a vast underground network of supporters? Did shop owners have bigger things to worry about than whether their signs were exactly right? Can I be certain that the CEO of Dollar Tree actually checks their answering machine? How must I continue in the face of such blatant adversity? I started to take drastic measures directed at any influential person with some sway and connection to Dorothy Day.

I dropped a banner in St. Patrick's Cathedral imploring Cardinal Timothy Dolan to recognize the clear reality that one cannot both support the canonization of Dorothy Day and also support the abolition of the penny. Moral hypocrisy! I demanded a meeting with Staten Island Burrough President Vito Fossella at the Staten Island Mall food court to get him to see how ludicrous it would be to sail the Dorothy Day Staten Island Ferry if her legacy was clouded with the destruction of the penny. I sent letter after letter to the estate of Abraham Lincoln begging for recognition of a shared fight for both respective legacies.

At this point I found myself obsessed. I was lost. My brain had become like a confused driver in a suburban roundabout. You can only scream into the penniless void so much before you start to wonder whether it will ever scream back. At night I found myself rolling back and forth muttering, over and over again, "Memory, legacy, memory, legacy." One night I found myself up at three in the morning staring at an article about Canadian Prime Minister Emeritus Stephen Harper's college fraternity, because I had gone so far down the rabbit hole of Canada's successful journey of destroying their penny. Who had I become? Had I lost myself in the journey to save the legacy of a founder who could not care less about the penny or the title of her book? Why do people care so much about pointless political decisions? How do we decide what is important to us? On what issues are we willing to side with millionaire metal CEOs? Is my entry into this fight a form of escapism? Escaping from the relentless "too big to fail" problems I see around me? Frankly, I do not know the answer to these questions. I do not know what motivated me to do all the things I did. Although I am proud of my work, and would pick it up again if the pro-penny movement ever asked me to, I must hang up my shoes for now. Back to the soup I go. I must let the legacy of our model and co-founder Dorothy Day rest in the hands of our heroes, most especially Tom Wennogle of Big Zinc.

But I promise you one thing, while I stir, and I will stir often, I will be thinking of new passages. Of new ways forward. My fellow workers and I will pave new passageways for the penny. The labyrinth that is US society will be mowed down into a copper-green pasture! For now I will stir soup. But I, in every turn of the wrist, yes, every single one, I will dream of a future. A future, where this paper you are reading right now can still be sold for a penny a copy. ✦

CLARENCE JENKINS, RIP

By JIM REAGAN

The first thing many people didn't know about Clarence was his name. Many volunteers, when they first arrived at St. Joe's, would be delivering mail and stumble across an envelope addressed to Willie Jenkins. They'd ask if we knew him, and we would explain that Willie was, in fact, Clarence. The smaller mysteries of Clarence's life and personality unfolded from there.

We first got to know Clarence when he'd stop by some evenings to watch television in the kitchen with Whiskers and others. He'd met Whiskers years before when they worked together. About twelve years ago, he was about to undergo a medical procedure, and asked if he could stay with us for three months while he recovered. We agreed. Then, like so many others who live with us, three months stretched into six months, then a year, and then a lifetime. In Clarence's case, medical complications extended his initial stay, but I'm not sure any of us remember why he stayed after that.

Clarence lived in the dorm space on the third floor. He watched a great deal of television, and his viewing habits and his interactions around them provided some insight into who he was. Actually, his complaints that he watched too much TV offered a glimpse into how Clarence might have liked to live differently than he did. Television also offered a window into his vast field of interests. Clarence often watched documentaries and loved many PBS programs. One of my fondest memories is watching Shakespeare's *Richard II* with him.

Clarence was a devout Jehovah's Witness and loved watching anything about early Christianity. He'd sometimes use what he learned as ammunition in his polemical discussions and arguments over religion with Phil or James. But Clarence also loved the Three Stooges, Wells Fargo and other reruns of serialized Westerns from the 1950s and 60s. He was a generous man, and if a sporting event grabbed someone else's interest, he'd change the channel to watch it with them. Eugene was the most frequent beneficiary of Clarence's largesse. Eugene, who lives in a room next to Clarence's space, would find Clarence watching some documentary and immediately mention that Law and Order or some other favorite police procedural was on. I could never decide if it was a generous heart or Eugene's constant commentary that led to Clarence eventually changing the channel.

Clarence was also generous to numerous people in the house who sought him out to spill their litany of woes, knowing that he would patiently listen. Occasionally I would overhear their conversations, and Clarence's lines in the script were often, "Uh huh" or "Mmm hmm," as he let the disgruntled person go on and on. Clarence, too, had his disgruntled moments. We know he struggled at times with the challenges presented by living in a house of hospitality. He could be absentminded and would commonly misplace something, and then tear up his space looking for the missing item. A slight paranoid streak compounded the problem, and Clarence would immediately assume that someone had stolen the item in question, causing him to announce, "There's a fox in the hen house." When the missing bit of property showed up a week or two later, evoking an "Oh snap! Here it is," he would either sheepishly admit he'd left it somewhere, or dig in his heels and wonder why a person would take something, and then return it and leave it on the edge of his dresser. To be fair, his suspicions were not completely without merit, for another man who lived on the third floor was fond of taking things.

Clarence's generosity extended to his interactions with people living on the street. At times, he'd staff the window, and with a pleasant smile, give out soup, tea, coffee or pieces of clothing to all who asked. If a stranger asked for some specific item, a pair of shoes in an odd size, Clarence would scour every inch of every bin in our cloth-

ing room to oblige the person outside. He also watched the door during the soupline, admitting folks who could be seated. Again, his kindness beamed a warm welcome to all who came.

As mentioned, Clarence also struggled with living at St. Joe's. At times, he'd seemingly sink into himself, spending days in bed. Health issues plagued him throughout his life. Clarence was a man of faith, and it was not unusual to find him reading Scripture. On the Sabbath, he could cut a dashing figure in tie and ironed slacks, to attend the sermon at Kingdom Hall. And then there were the many odds and ends that added up to the man he was. One day, as a number of us gathered to play guitar and sing old doo wop songs, he chimed in with a previously unheard strong singing voice, and he even grabbed the harmonies. His listening habits, however, leaned more to the classics and, walking past his area, I'd often hear the strains of a symphony or concerto softly emanating from his radio. Clarence was close to his family, and deaths or illnesses of relatives sometimes drove him to leave for the Bronx or Pennsylvania to tend to the ailing family member.

Clarence's spirit of generosity found its greatest recipient in Cathy, a close friend who was a number of years older than he was. In the early days of our acquaintance, when he'd visit Whiskers, Cathy, a longtime neighborhood resident, would sometimes accompany him. After he moved into St. Joe's, he'd often spend a morning or entire day lending a hand to help her with errands or chores. Other mornings or evenings, I'd hear him animatedly discussing some television program, only to find him on his cell phone with Cathy as they coordinated their viewing habits to watch the same shows and talk as if they were sitting on the sofa of a shared living room. When Cathy died, Clarence left to spend some days in her then-vacant apartment. We never saw him again. We received a phone call from his brother telling us that Clarence had died there of a heart attack, though perhaps he died of a broken heart. Rest in peace, Clarence, and may you enjoy eternal life in heaven. ✦

HALT SOLITARY

At the time of this writing there have been eighteen tragic deaths this year of prisoners being held under harsh conditions in New York City's jail complex on Rikers Island. This atrocious scandal is an ongoing consequence of what can only be called "a broken system." Accusations of wrongdoing and finger pointing are sterile exercises. What is desperately needed are profound structural changes to immediately relieve horrible human suffering. These changes will only succeed if they are based on compassion and not strictly on budgetary concerns. They must be focussed on specific issues relating to keeping all the human beings on Rikers Island safe.

Fran Geteles, a clinical psychologist, is an ardent activist against the use of solitary confinement as a way to punish prisoners for infractions. Solitary confinement is a form of torture (see "End New York's Use of Solitary" by Victoria Law in the June-July 2018 issue of *The Catholic Worker*). The grassroots citizens movement in which Fran has long participated is called the New York Campaign For Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (nycaic.org). That organization has recently succeeded, along with the help of other groups, in getting both the New York State Senate and the New York City Council to pass the Humane Alternatives To Long-term Confinement Act (HALT). Mayor Eric Adams has so far not signed the HALT Act into law.

For more information on ways to help, please contact the website of the New York Campaign For Alternatives to Isolated Confinement and join us for a Friday Night Meeting on January 6th with Fran Geteles.

—Bill Griffin

Black Nuns Pioneered Care

By EFRAN MENNY

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I graduated from Texas Southern University, an HBCU (Historically Black College and University) located in the heart of Houston, Texas, in 2013 with my bachelor of social work degree. I remember the coursework vividly: constant overviews of the history of social welfare, heavy emphasis on the eras of modern-day progressivism and liberalism in the 20th century, and frameworks and paradigms to understand human behavior. We also learned much about the broad history of social work in America.

Currently, I am one semester away from obtaining my Master of Social Work and I am discerning whether to pursue a doctorate. However, with this achievement in my grasp and my career ambitions in view, I have noticed an emphasis in academic circles concerning anti-racism and the eradication of White Supremacist narratives in my particular field. With that in mind, I re-examined my undergraduate coursework to see if it was tainted with a White-dominated focus. Indeed, after much reflection, I realized I never learned about the importance of our African-American forerunners in social work and policy—which was particularly odd at an HBCU. Though we rooted everything in being culturally competent and practicing in an urban environment with marginalized and diverse groups, especially African Americans, the highlighting of that community's contributions was largely nonexistent.

Since social work has a longstanding history in Christianity, which is also told from a White-dominant standpoint, I thought it would be insightful to investigate the impact of African-American Catholics in social work. Just like other African-Americans, they had to create their own services, schools, advocacy groups, and resources due to racism, Jim Crow, and purposeful neglect, so I knew their history would be full of determination and struggle. In particular, Black religious sisters stand out.

The History of Black Catholics in the United States by the late Fr. Cyprian Davis, OSB details the pioneering experiences of Black nuns prior to the Civil War. Therein, he emphasizes three women in particular: Servant of God Mary Lange and her Oblate Sisters of Providence, Venerable Henriette DeLille with her Sisters of the Holy Family, and Mother Mathilda Beasley, OSF alongside her Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis.

These women not only made history by creating the first religious orders operated by and for Black women, but they also laid the foundation for a century of Black Catholic progress in religious life and demonstrated abundant charity to meet the needs of African Americans during the 19th century.

Lange was a Cuban-born woman of Haitian descent who immigrated from the island to Baltimore as an adolescent. In 1821, with the support of Sulpician priest Fr. James Joubert, Mother Mary Lange and three other women founded the Oblate Sisters there in 1829. The women had already been working to meet the needs of the community by serving as catechists for African American children. The small school they started would eventually become St. Frances Academy (which is still functioning to this day). In 1831, the order would be called to lend their charity to victims of the cholera epidemic then plaguing the nation. Because of their dedication to the sick and their selfless service in care facilities, the women were highly admired.

Less than two decades after Joubert died in 1843, the Civil War began, occasioning the sisters' even greater focus on education. In 1863, the order established a night school for African American children in Philadelphia, and in 1864, they established a school for girls and women, including orphans and the formerly enslaved. In addition, the sisters created a facility for African American children orphaned or rendered homeless by the war.

In short, the Oblates were some of the first in the US to carry the baton for social services and care in the African American community. Their contribution is inestimable.

The second prominent Black religious order for women began in New Orleans. No stranger to meeting the educational and religious needs of the city's enslaved women and free Blacks, its founder, Henriette DeLille—herself a mixed-race Creole born in the city—had long been engaged in this work alongside a number of local women.

By 1842, the Sisters of the Holy Family was established. In the city's French Quarter, DeLille and her companions rented housing spaces where they administered services to African-American men and women living in poverty. In addition, the Order purchased a lodge that would serve as a hospital for the terminally ill.

Prior to the Civil War, the Sisters created an orphanage, provided religious instruction, and even had a school for young girls. Similar to the Oblates, the Holy Family Sisters aided New Orleans when yellow fever epidemics ravaged the city in 1853 and 1897. Through their caregiving role in an ailing city, they administered aid to the infirm and care to those most impacted by the outbreak. DeLille and her sisters invested unreservedly in the needs of the community, and their unparalleled devotion kept them motivated toward charitable mercy to whomever needed Christ-like compassion.

Our last pioneer of social welfare, Mother Beasley, was born to mixed-race Creole and Indigenous parents. In 1857, she married a free Black man named Abraham Beasley, a wealthy entrepreneur. Prior to the Civil War, she also assisted with a school dedicated to educating free and enslaved African American children in Savannah, Georgia. By engaging in this type of service, which violated Savannah's anti-literacy laws for Blacks at the time (not unlike those broken by Lange in Baltimore and DeLille in New Orleans), Beasley demonstrated her commitment to the well-being of her people.

Beasley's husband died in 1878 and left his estate to her. Feeling the call to religious life, in the 1880s, she traveled to England to become a nun. She later returned to Georgia and founded the Sisters of the Third Order. This small band of Black women, with Mathilda as their mother superior, performed groundbreaking service and created the St. Francis Home for Colored Orphans—one of the first such facilities for African American girls.

Beasley's legacy in Georgia left a vital imprint on the state's history. Because of her selfless dedication to the education of African American orphans and her status as the state's first Black nun, she was posthumously named a Georgia Woman of Achievement in 2004.

It's worth highlighting that both DeLille and Lange have open causes for canonization. In other words, because of their extraordinary works of charity to those on the margins, they are exemplary models of the heroic virtues indicative of a saint. Both of these witnesses of the Catholic faith prove the heroic transformation of grace that enables one to embody the spirit of Christ. According to *Aleteia*, Beasley also had a canonization process under review in 2016.

African American religious sisters were on the cutting edge of slow change in the US Church. They were successful despite white racism and economic challenges. Their communities weren't fully staffed or fully funded and only had a small band of dedicated women. Because of the service of the early African American nuns, one could make the case that they raised the consciousness of the US Church for acceptance of Black vocations, male and female. Because these women took significant strides to claim equality and to answer the call of religious life, the larger Black community—already called as God's own possession—could enter the pathway of Christ more intimately through a life of consecrated service.

In my undergraduate years studying social work, I never heard of these saints, these holy women engaged in vital services. Perhaps this is due to anti-Catholic bias. But even in popular histories within the Church, we often hear of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and the parochial school system or St. Frances Xavier Cabrini and her dedication to the sick and the poor, but hardly ever do we hear of pioneering African American Catholics—and Black nuns specifically.

Their landmark contributions to advancing human dignity, ensuring quality secular and religious education for African Americans, and dedication to the infirm and destitute were significant steps in the larger narrative

of meeting basic needs in the community and empowering the vulnerable.

As an educator of nearly ten years in a predominantly Black and brown areas, I am happy to walk in the crucial footsteps of Black Catholic religious sisters. Their commitment and resolve to bring equitable access is a catalyst for my career in education-infused social work. I pray that the resounding power of these humble and holy women, their good works and witness to the Catholic faith, gives us power to embrace Catholic Social Teaching and continue to meet the needs of African Americans.

Mother Mathilda Beasley, Venerable Henriette DeLille, and Servant of God Mary Elizabeth Lange, please pray for us. ✚

BOOK REVIEW

ON PILGRIMAGE: The Seventies by Dorothy Day. Edited by Robert Ellsberg. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 2022.

A LIVING GOSPEL: Reading God's Story In Holy Lives by Robert Ellsberg. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 2019. Reviewed by Dan Mauk.

I begin these reviews with an admission of bias since Robert Ellsberg and I both arrived at the Catholic Worker during the summer of 1975. I have long admired Robert as a topnotch writer and editor. The two books in this review are examples of his gifts and those of Dorothy Day.

Reading On Pilgrimage: The Seventies brought back a myriad of memories of the most fascinating and inspiring woman I have met in my lifetime. To read Dorothy's "On Pilgrimage" columns that appeared in *The Catholic Worker* during the 1970s takes the reader on a colorful journey of Dorothy's likes (and a few dislikes). It is filled with the names of other kindred spirits such as Cesar Chavez, Peter Maurin, Angela Davis (whom Dorothy described as "a beautiful young woman") and many others.

I can well recall that when Dorothy recommended reading a particular book, I would borrow her copy or head off to one of the many used book stores that were a part of the East Village at that time. Dorothy's columns are rich in book citations and recommendations that could keep anyone busy reading for months, if not longer: Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Sigrid Undset, Ignazio Silone, Peter Kropotkin to name a few. The first book Dorothy loaned me was Sigrid Undset's, *Kristin Lavransdatter*, a beautiful novel that I reread several times.

Other themes in Dorothy's columns were her ongoing appreciation and interest in

"the young people," opera, prayer, and what she called "reminiscing" to teach and "keep memories alive." Also described are several of the trips Dorothy made before becoming more confined to her room due to old age and a failing heart. We read about Dorothy in India, Tanzania, Russia, and her last arrest while supporting Cesar and Helen Chavez and The United Farmworkers.

Dorothy had a witty sense of humor which delightfully pops up in her columns. During a time in her life when she found aging a difficult challenge and wrote that her column, "On Pilgrimage," might more aptly be titled "On The Shelf." When describing the role of the young people in "taking the house" (which involved cooking, cleaning, tending to emergencies and the many folks knocking on the door in need of assistance) she wrote, "There are always others who assume authority which they do not have. This problem has always and will always be with us."

I have included Robert's book, *A Living Gospel*, because it is a well written description of how he became a "Saint Watcher," beginning as a boy in high school, something I was not aware of despite our many decades of friendship. This slim volume does what its title indicates—it reads God's story in holy lives. The lives are an eclectic group consisting of Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Flannery O'Connor, Charles de Foucauld, Mary Ward, Mother Mary Joseph, Madeleine Delbrèl and Pope Francis. Adding to the enjoyment of a good read are numerous photographs which add a deeper sense of reality to the lives mentioned.

In conclusion, I applaud Robert for his consistency in writing excellent introductions to his books. His introduction to *On Pilgrimage: The Seventies* captures the essence in a concise manner that is a wonderful addition to the corpus of Catholic Worker writings. ✚



William Hart McNichols