

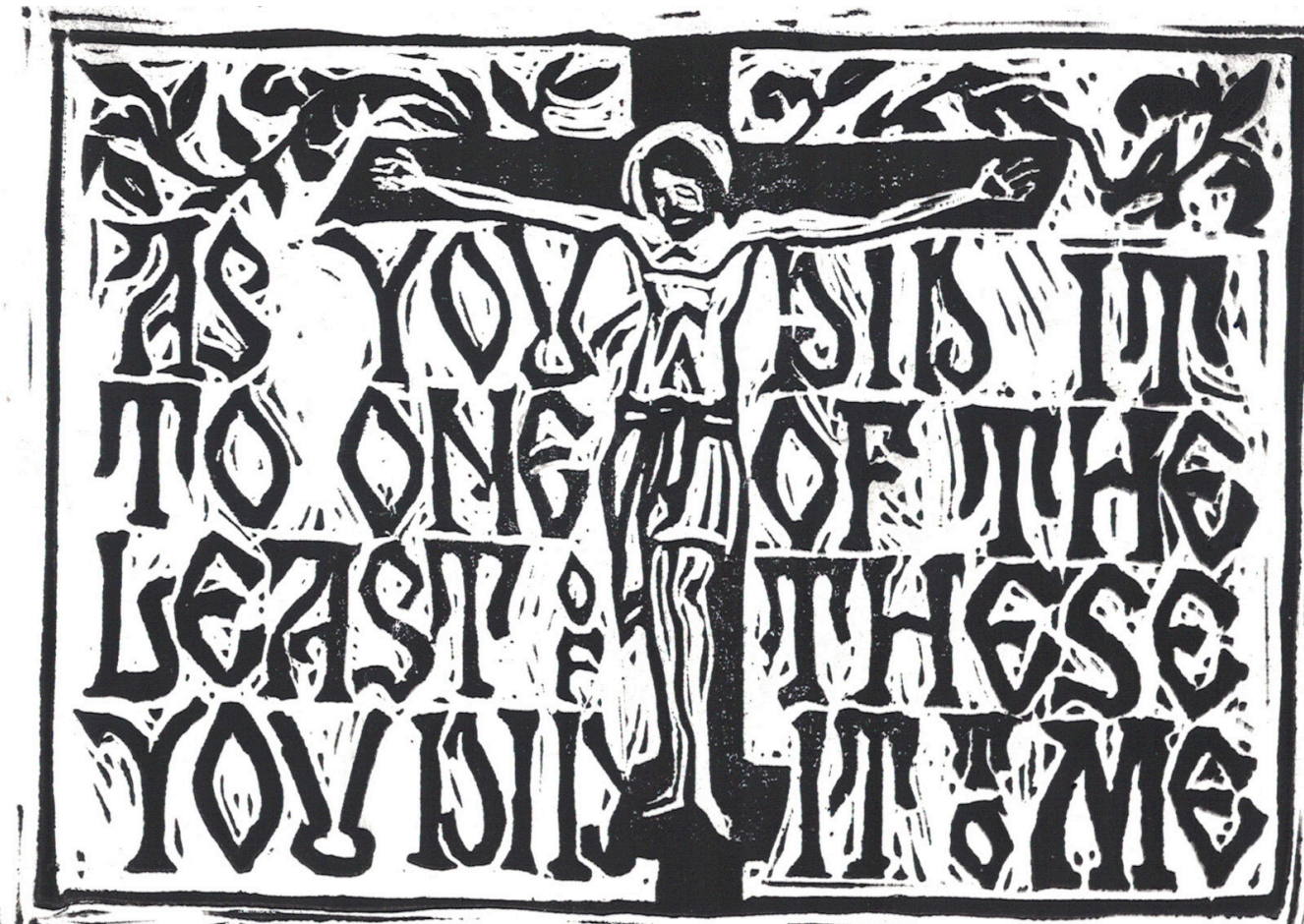
RADIX

A Wichita Catholic
Worker Newspaper
Seeking Goodness,
Beauty, and Truth.

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The Original Personalist

by Mattie Jenkins

Jesus Christ is the Original and Great Personalist: the model for how we must treat our brothers and sisters and the standard against which we must judge ourselves.

As Catholics, we believe in the inherent dignity of the human person as created in the image of God. If each human person is an image-bearer, then they are entitled to a certain standard of living which is

distributed inequitably under present conditions. The whole of the Catholic Worker model of life centers around this emphasis on human dignity: Houses of Hospitality to address immediate suffering and injustices, farming communes to restore dignified work and re-establish harmony between Man and Creation, and roundtable discussions for the clarification of thought

and edification of society.

Personalism places upon us a twofold call of sight. First, it calls us to see the person before us, to see them for all that is true at the moment and all that is true in light of Eternity. They are for us a representative of Christ. Second, it calls us to see ourselves and our participation in the evils which we rail against.

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Woodcut by Ade Bethune

God is Love

by Dr. Jeremy Sienkiewicz

God is Love. What implications does this have in the way we try to navigate our lives in the postmodern, post-industrial liberal West? Dorothy Day's radical life shows the dynamism that is love in the face of ever-changing realities. How to love is not understood in an abstract and all-encompassing way that merely needs to be lived in the exact same way in every time and place.

Such an easy way of understanding Christianity does not correspond to the cunning of the world, the flesh and the devil's continual changing strategies for the different permutations of cultures throughout the history of the world. And, to be sure, we live in a different culture now than anyone ever has

(perhaps this is true for every culture). As *Gaudium et Spes* explains: "Humanity is passing through a new phase of its history, in which profound and rapid changes are gradually affecting the whole world" (GS 4). The Council Fathers insist that we need "wisdom to humanize our new discoveries" (GS 15). This wisdom, the foolishness of men, can only be illumined by the life, death, and resurrection of the only Man who truly lived and loved: Jesus Christ (cf. GS 22).

The transformation of human societies stemming from the industrial and scientific revolutions have not only reordered our daily lives, but have refounded man on a way of life that carries with it an anthropol-

ogy and theology that are often alien to the Revelation of Christ. Radical individualism leads to a loneliness that is deadly (consider the rising suicide rates of Western society which have surpassed anything in recorded history). It is deadly because it refuses to see that man's life is not perfected in consumption or in always being able to do 'whatever floats my particular boat'. Rather, it is in the love that is a total gift of myself to the point of death for the other.

This love brings about the perfection of man in a way that is counterintuitive to the modern individualist: the perfection found in the other. Jesus inaugurated a Kingdom of God which is moving towards a New Jerusalem, a city, a community of people who have died to themselves in Christ, washing their robes in the blood of the Lamb, that they might live for the other. Here is where joy is found. Here is where the darkness has been illumined. We need not sit in darkness. We must not let others sit so.

Instead, we must seek to bring about communities which are fraternal ("who is my brother and my sister and my mother") and seek the good of the other despite one's own concupiscent desires. We must have communities that are built upon true human work which takes into account man as an artist who puts himself into the world and, by doing so, redeems it. We must have communities that are based in leisure and built upon the foundation of a cultural dialogue with and about God and the mystery of human life. Without worship at the center of community, individual

fragmentation is inevitable. We must have communities that bring about human dignity in decent living and loving.

This is not to be accomplished by government programs initiated by force of tax dollars and run by folks seeking a paycheck rather than love. Instead, care for the money-poor and friend-poor has to be the basis of our communities. Such care has to be at the root of any interpersonal dialogue between anyone. It must be the joyful and fulfilling responsibility of all citizens.

Will these ideas, when put into place in the unique way they must be in our world today, seem crazy, impractical and a waste of time before such a behemoth of social ills and concupiscence? Certainly. Yet, as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem that is being ushered in now, for what else are we to live? "To whom else shall we go? Thou hast the words of everlasting life." To be a fool for Christ is the only truly way to be Christ. He himself was seen as a failure. Yet, he changed and redeemed the world. How do we believe we could do that same act or, better, participate in his very redemption, if we are merely successful according to the newest idolatrous way of life that has been served up from our own Babel-tower-building? Death is the only true life. Any other life is not worth living. ■

Dr. Jeremy Sienkiewicz, husband and father of five, is a professor of Theology and Evangelization at Benedictine College in Atchison, KS. He is the founder of the Cana House of Hospitality in Atchison.

Feeding the Poor at a Sacrifice

by Peter Maurin

In the first centuries
of Christianity
the hungry were fed
at a personal sacrifice,
the naked were clothed
at a personal sacrifice,
the homeless were sheltered
at personal sacrifice.

And because the poor
were fed, clothed and sheltered
at a personal sacrifice,
the pagans used to say
about the Christians
“See how they love each other.”

In our own day
the poor are no longer
fed, clothed, sheltered
at a personal sacrifice,
but at the expense
of the taxpayers.

And because the poor
are no longer
fed, clothed and sheltered
the pagans say about the Christians
“See how they pass the buck.”

Peter Maurin was the co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement and wrote much of his ideas in what became coined as ‘Easy Essays’. “Feeding the Poor at a Sacrifice” was taken from the Catholic Worker website www.catholicworker.org.



Reflection: Gerard Manley Hopkins’ *God’s Grandeur*

by Patrick McKenzie

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man’s smudge and shares man’s smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs -
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

[Gerard Manley Hopkins]

When we go downtown and post up at the Episcopal Church’s parking lot to hand out coffee, snacks, water, etc., the atmosphere often feels bleak. Men and women, tired and ragged, saunter up to the parking lot with dirty clothes and unwashed faces. Some come bruised, some with no clothes, some just skin and bones. And I wonder, where is hope? Where is hope for the schizophrenic woman who got kicked out of her apartment again and is sleeping in the cold? Where is hope for the homeless girl with autism who asks us for a blanket every other day and drowns us with gratitude? Where is hope for the man who talks nonsense and sleeps under

benches, but has love in his eyes?

I do not have an answer. Yet, as we enter the Advent Season, approaching Christmas, we are told that Christ is coming and, mysteriously, is already here. I am reminded by Hopkins’ words in his poem *God’s Grandeur* that even in (more accurately, especially in) the lowliest, most destitute persons, *there lives the dearest freshness*. Despite the dreary and hopeless landscape we find ourselves in, *The world is charged with the Grandeur of God*.

A young man, still a teenager, who has been homeless for a while now, came into the bookstore where I work yesterday. He brought up a pocket Bible to the counter and pulled a small wad of bills from his pocket, the meager earnings of his panhandling. More than food, more than water, he said that he needed a Bible. He could go a few days without food, he explained, he’d just be hungry. But without God’s Word, he’d lose hope. Let us not lose hope during this Advent season. Let us constantly be reminded that in every person we encounter we are truly encountering the grandeur of God. ■

*And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs*



And He Saw That It Was Good

by Catalina Todossoude (translated by Mattie Jenkins)

“Vegetation sprouted up from the earth; plants according to their kind, and fruit trees that give fruit according to their kind. And God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:12). That is what I think of the garden at Casa Juan Diego: that it is good. A very wise girl once told me that all of the vegetation (the plants, the trees, etc.) glorify the Lord just by existing, and she was not in any way mistaken. The cherubim proclaim that “all the Earth is full of His glory.” For me, the garden at Casa Juan Diego is exactly that, part of the reflection of the Glory of God.

“When the LORD God made the heavens and the earth, there was still no bush on the land nor grass growing in the field, because the LORD God had still not sent rain over the Earth, and there was no

one to cultivate the land; however, a spring flowed out of the Earth and flowed over the surface of the soil. Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the Earth, He breathed in his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. So the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden so that he would cultivate and care for it” (Genesis 2:5, 15).

The Lord God gave us the grace to have the garden, He gave us the breath of life that allows us to get up every day with the intention to cultivate it and care for it. The decision has always been in our hands. For my part, I have decided to choose Him and live cultivating and caring for the beautiful, green gift that He gave me. What will you decide?

Another thing that fills my soul

each day is the conviction that the garden is a display of the artistry of the Lord, but an artistry that goes beyond. I love the fact that everything created by Him is not by chance. If one takes the time to pay attention, they realize that each part of each plant has purpose and meaning. Returning to what I said about artistry, it is a simple delight for my eyes to see the plants and it is a delight with which I connect. The Lord gave me my sight, and not just any, but sight that allows me to perceive colors in the clever way that He combined them. He gave me my sense of smell. I can smell the diverse aromas that come from flowers and certain plants like peppermint, spearmint, rosemary, and many more.

The Lord is quite meticulous, He

is full of wisdom, He is a wonderful artist! His creation truly is good. He said it Himself and that is remarkable: “He saw that His creation was good,” but not complete, nowhere is the word *complete* used in Genesis.

To get to the point in all of this, I am simply trying to articulate what God revealed to me, that is, that the work of the Lord, the beautiful Work of creation, was not perfect, it was not complete. What is lacking for it to be complete? What must be done so that it is complete? Nothing more than living. Nothing more than working, cultivating, caring for it and letting it be. Letting it grow, expressing itself until it becomes the fullest expression of itself. All this is a grace and gift of the Lord. ■

Catalina is a former guest at the Houston Catholic Worker.

What Friends of the Catholic Worker are Reading (and why you should, too)

Laurus

by Eugene Vodolazkin

“Laurus is tragic and gorgeous. It follows the life of a man in Medieval Russia as he journeys through life wrestling with loss, fate, sin and identity. Much like *Crime and Punishment* and *Island of the World*, there is enough hope in this book to make diving into the depths of its despair worthwhile.” —Brooke

Unbroken

by Laura Hillenbrand

“Louis Zamperini’s story of survival is a remarkable testament to the hope and resilience of the human person. His story is also a sorrowful reminder of the Hell that war is and the grave depravity it causes to humans, both good and bad alike.” —Abe

Brotherhood Economics

by Toyohiko Kagawa

“Even if written in another era, Toyohiko Kagawa’s work is a reminder of the timeless truth that the Gospel makes revolutionary demands on our entire life—including the economic systems that we develop and support. *Brotherhood Economics* presents practical steps for the reconstruction of society via an economics based on a social consciousness reformed by the Gospel.” —Mattie

The Glass Castle

by Jeannette Walls

“Jeannette’s life almost seems fictional. Her story is so wild that it feels made up. Her memoir took me out of myself, my comfortable life, and reminded me of the gift that it is to enter into another’s life, no matter how messy.” —Sopheo



“Peter on the Farm” by V. Diaz

Peter Maurin: Master Agitator

by Mattie Jenkins

During the first ever Peter Maurin Conference, hosted by Mary Mother of God Parish in Chicago the first weekend of September, one truth emerged above all the rest: we need Peter Maurin. In an age oversaturated with information, we need his clarity. In a Church drowsed by complacency, we need his vision. In a time ravaged by boredom and busyness, we need his exhortations to dignified work and study. And in a world captivated by consumerism, we need the lived witness of his commitment to the poor.

For those who are unfamiliar with the name, Peter Maurin (1877-1949) was co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, and provided its philosophical inspiration. He was openly critical of capitalist and industrialist society and the moral ills that it occasioned, for rich and poor alike. But beyond criticism, he

lived in deliberate protest against it through personal, radical poverty and the daily practice of the Works of Mercy (feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and welcoming the stranger; see Matthew 25). He called for a return to the roots of our faith through an emphasis on prayer and work, hospitality, living off the land, and the clarification of thought.

The Peter Maurin Conference was as much a celebration of his life as a rekindling of his vision. Peter left us his legacy in the form of Easy Essays, and their lovely frankness affords no time wasted discerning what is wrong. Those of us who gathered in Chicago spent time, and will continue to spend time, discerning what we will do to remedy the wrong, but, consistent with the witness of his life and the history of the Movement, we know our responsibility is to waste no time either. I encourage everyone to look up some of Peter’s Easy Essays and reflect upon them, because for all of us, his life and writings can be a compelling antidote to the afflictions of our time. Therefore, let us not give up meeting together for clarification of thought. Let us practice genuine Christian hospitality and charity. Let us respect the soil, for from it come the gifts of life. And let us “imitate the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary by trying to give all we can” (from the Easy Essay “Tradition or Catholic Action”). ■

*Recap of the Peter Maurin
Conference, September 6-8, 2024*



Woodcut by Ade Bethune

Good Work, Done Well

by Will Mohr

Working takes up much of our lives. Just think. The usual full-time job requires ~40 hours a week. This often does not include time for lunch. So it is more like 45 hours. Then there usually is a commute of some sort. Let's say an extra 5 minutes each way, if you are lucky, and sometimes a lot more. So, that is another hour or two. Then often we spend time thinking about our work when not at work. Who knows how much time that takes. Not to mention how many people simply work when they are not on the clock, sending emails, taking calls, adding something to a report.... And this is just the work we do that we refer to as work. It is our paid work, our jobs. There is also the work that is not our job, the mowing, trimming,

painting, cleaning, cooking, teaching, etc. We must not forget our hobbies, which in many cases are considered work. We spend most of our lives working, but rarely ask why we work.

Let us look at our jobs first, the remunerative work we do. I often ask, "Why do you work at your job?" Often the person replies, "money," to which I follow up, "Why do you work for money?" The person has almost always talked about providing for themselves and their family and usually in concrete terms. "I have to feed, clothe, shelter, and educate my family, and take care of them when they are sick." This is true, all persons are to work to provide for themselves and their families in a dignified way. Then it

is clear, we do not work for money. We work for that which money is a tool to provide for and that is provisions for real needs and desires. Consequently, we work to provide for real needs.

Providing for concrete needs needs no justification, and needs no justification for doing well. No one needs to defend farming, home building, or maintaining clean drinking water as legitimate and good work. No one argues against doing these works well. We would not want to take cost saving shortcuts with the framing of our homes and the quality of our drinking water. Furthermore, these works often come with great cost, and usually not in the hope of a future return. In fact, I would imagine we would still

be farming, building homes, and sourcing clean water for ourselves without any return. The money does not matter, and often obscures the real value of the work. Good work, in and of itself, has value, needs no justification, and needs no justification for doing well.

This explanation makes our remunerative work align much more closely to all the other work we do. We cook for our families, repair our homes, clean our clothes, make our yards beautiful, provide for friends, volunteer our time, fix our cars; we do these things well, often at a cost to us, and without motivation of a return. In this unpaid work, we see the real value of the work and can rejoice in doing it well simply because it is good to do and good to do well. Not only do we see the value of work, but we often do it out of a desire to serve those that we love, which is more than can be said about most of our jobs.

If it is the case that you, the reader, disagree with my explanation as to why we work, and you believe that you really do work for money (as many people seem to do), I encourage you to pray with Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." and 1 Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs." For those who agree that the end of work is not money but to amass property, I would encourage praying with Matthew 6:19-21, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust con-

sume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

If it is true that good work meets real needs, that it needs no justification for its existence and its excellence, then why do we have to be motivated by money to work? And why are stores filled to the brim with cheap junk? I answer, much of our work is simply not good work, and of the good work, it is often done poorly. One does not need to look far to find examples of poor work. A quick walk through a Walmart, a look at the ingredient list of a Little Debbie snack, and the reliance on sensationalism across media I think illustrate my point. This is why we create massive advertising campaigns to convince each other to purchase the ever increasing fruits of poor work. By buying into the advertising that tells us we need more stuff and trips and services, we constantly work for more money to purchase said fruits, producing more and poorer quality things. As we produce more, we have to convince people to buy more. Cue the advertising campaigns! The cycle never ends, begetting more poor work and ever poorer fruits. No one ever had to convince anyone to buy a loaf of bread when they were hungry.

The root of this problem is sin, greed specifically. Good work and excellence do not exist where greed abounds. If people looked at their needs they would buy much less and use fewer services. If producers produced excellent goods and services, people would need fewer goods

and services because the goods and services would work better and last longer. If businesses were not motivated by amassing wealth (greed), then they would evaluate their business by the quality of the goods and services and not by net profit and hopes of endless growth. Greed distorts work and conflates work and its fruits with money, rather than recognizing the good of work itself and its naturally excellent fruits. When entrenched in society, greed leaves us with few options. We may ride on its coattails, hoping to get enough while trying hard to avoid the sin. We may embrace greed. We may cooperate with others’ greed and justify ourselves by being personally generous. We may struggle to work outside the societal cycle facing the fear of being unable to provide for ourselves. None of these sound great. Yet there is hope, for Christ says in Matthew 6:30-33,

“But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.”

So, let us beg the Holy Spirit that we may have good work to do well, that our heavenly Father will provide for us, that we may be zealously generous like our Father in heaven who gives abundantly and without return, and that we may be boldly and unabashedly Christian in the face of a non-Christian world. ■

Third Place

Peter Maurin called for Round-Table Discussions in order to have clarification of thought.

Through clarification of thought, we refrain from becoming idealists and are enabled to take action.

Our Round-Table Discussion is called Third Place.

We meet every other Thursday 8:00pm.
On off weeks, we have Evening Prayer and Community Meal at 7:00pm.

120 N Erie St
Wichita, KS 67214

If you’d like to receive notifications with meeting times and reading material, please send us an email at romerocatholicworker@gmail.com.

All are welcome.

Good Samaritan Law Passes in Kansas

On July 1, 2024, Senate Bill 419 became law in Kansas. This law, commonly known as a ‘Good Samaritan Law’, prevents persons assisting in medical intervention due to drug-related causes from being prosecuted. The bill passed unanimously in the Kansas House and Senate, 114-0 and 31-0 respectively.

A long time coming, Kansas is the second to last state in the country to pass some form of a Good Samaritan Law. Despite personal feelings about drug use and addiction, this law will undoubtedly save lives and assist in keeping those who are most vulnerable safe.

If you encounter someone experiencing an overdose or other drug-related medical crisis, please call 911 immediately. If you have naloxone (commonly referred to as Narcan) administer it through the nose and try to keep the person awake. Roll them onto their side to prevent choking and wait for First Responders to show up.

Thanks to Senate Bill 419, we no longer have to fear assisting someone experiencing an overdose. Fentanyl continues grow in our country and overdoses will likely follow. We must do our best to stay informed and aware of how to help in a crisis. ■

No evil, no violence exists for which we are not in some way responsible, and it is through the Works of Mercy that we fulfill both the call to see our brothers and sisters and work toward a society which uplifts their dignity.

In Dostoevsky's powerful novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, the character Father Zossima says, "There is only one means of salvation, then take yourself and make yourself responsible for all men's sins ... If the evil doing of men moves you to indignation and overwhelming distress, even to a desire for vengeance on the evildoers, shun above all things that feeling. Go at once and seek suffering for yourself, as though you were yourself guilty of that wrong. Accept that suffering and bear it and your heart will

find comfort, and you will understand that you too are guilty, for you might have been a light to the evildoers, even as the one man sinless, and you were not a light to them" (book 6, chp. 3).

We would like to blame others for making (or refusing to make) this or that decision, for neglecting to care for the poor and vulnerable, for accumulating and amassing at the expense of their brother, yet we are all, in some way, guilty of these same sins. I may not have withheld wages or exploited laborers, but have the meals I've enjoyed been the product of such injustice? What about the clothes that I wear? I may do my best to treat with mercy the homeless man seated on the curb as I walk to Mass, but have I shown mercy to the friend who insults

me? Have I forgiven as I have been forgiven in Christ? I disagree with bombings, wars, violence, but how often must I confess my loss of temper? It is this anger, lurking inside me, that perpetrates the violence I so vehemently oppose. I come to understand that the evil and sin in the world does not exist apart from me, it is the result of the fallen condition common to all of us, and that, more than anything, helps me to understand fraternity.

There is no way to escape taking personal responsibility not just for our brothers and sisters, but also for the injustices that they face. Yet, mercifully, inasmuch as we have participated in evil, we can participate in true Goodness. Oh, the mercy of God, who goes beyond condemnation to call us higher, to

give us a role in this work of redemption! We are not without the means of working toward a society that more closely reflects the Kingdom of God; we are called not just to resist with our words and actions as citizens of this country and of the world, but also to resist the forces of evil within ourselves, to strive always toward the redemption and perfect love of Christ crucified.

And therein lies the beauty of it all: the Man upon the Cross, who saw us, who loved us, who chose to take upon Himself all of our sins, so that we might know our worth in the eyes of the Father. Jesus of Nazareth is the Original and Great Personalist, and it is only through faith in Him that we can bear the yoke of love and responsibility to our neighbor. ■



A Beautiful Interruption

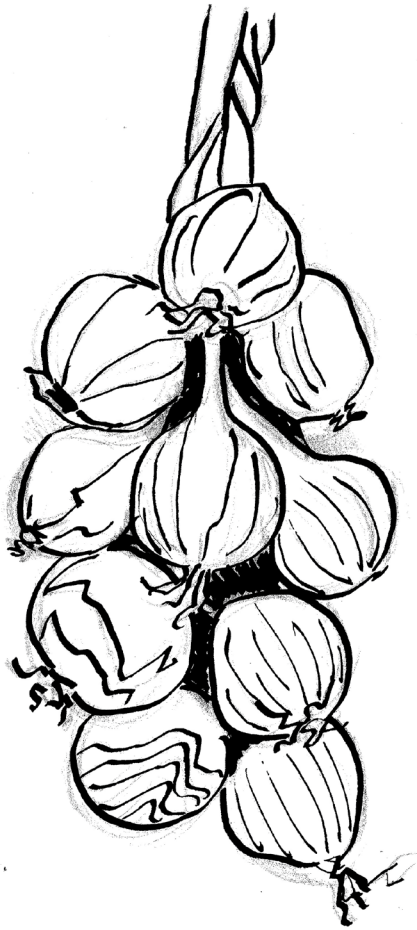
by Kaylor Nordhus

I was driving home a few nights ago, and as I got out of my car to walk up the steps to my house, I couldn't help but sense the stillness in the darkness around me: there was a hint and whisper of Fall air, crisp and new, a promise of something. My gaze was drawn upward to see a handful of stars dotted amidst a night sky, at least, those that are visible inside the city limits of Wichita. As I was met by the stars, I felt more grounded in reality, and breathed a brief but full sigh of relief.

Our hearts are made to be pierced by beauty.

What is beauty? It's the attractiveness of reality, and one of the core desires of being human that finds its ultimate end in God himself. The visual arts, music, poetry, nature: all are echoes and fragments of Beauty himself, God.

Often, beauty is something that we don't recognize as imperative to being human such as sleeping, eating, and communing with others. But beauty and be-ing are intrinsically connected, and when we stop to not only be interrupted by beauty, but choose to enter into it, we get back in touch with what is core to being human: be-ing. Beauty slows us down, grounds us in reality, and gifts us back to ourselves while drawing us deeper into the Heart of God. My invitation to you, wherever you are, is to allow beauty to interrupt your life today, and to respond. ■



Starting a Garden

A central part of the Catholic Worker Movement is what Peter Maurin, co-founder, called the “Agronomic University”. At the beginning, the Catholic Worker found itself in the midst of the Great Depression. People were out of jobs and lost much of their savings, leaving them without the means to purchase even their basic necessities like food.

The Great Depression highlighted and exacerbated what was already a growing problem, people were not working on the land and not growing their own food. As a salve to this widespread problem, Peter recognized a need to return to the land, especially in the context of communities. As he used to say, “there’s no unemployment on the land”.

Over the next ninety years, various Catholic Worker communities have lived out an interpretation of Peter Maurin’s Agronomic University in diverse ways. Some have started full-fledged farms and some just planted a few garden beds in their backyard. Whether we have hundreds of acres or a few square feet, what’s most important is that we begin the work of cultivating what has been given to us. It is the timeless responsibility to cultivate and steward the land that God entrusted to Adam in the Garden.

Before starting the Romero Catholic Worker, we knew that working with the land would be an integral part of the particular movement in Wichita. So many families and individuals do not have the resources to buy fresh produce from grocery stores as the cost of living continues to rise. It is our hope that we can not only help some with providing fresh, locally grown produce, but that we can help educate, promulgate, and assist others in stewarding their own land.

Up till now, we have only been able to grow a few meager vegetables in small plots, however, thanks to the generosity of those at the Lord’s Diner, we have been given permission to use the garden located at the Diner’s south location. We are very excited to collaborate with the Lord’s Diner to cultivate this plot of land. Already we have planted a few beds with radishes (that are almost ready to be harvested!), leafy greens, onions, and garlic. ■

What the Catholic Worker Believes

by Peter Maurin

The Catholic Worker believes in the gentle personalism of traditional Catholicism.

The Catholic Worker believes in the personal obligation of looking after the needs of our brother.

The Catholic Worker believes in the daily practice of the Works of Mercy.

The Catholic Worker believes in Houses of Hospitality for the immediate relief of those who are in need.

The Catholic Worker believes in the establishment of Farming Communes where each one works according to his capacity and gets according to his need.

The Catholic Worker believes in creating a new society within the shell of the old with the philosophy of the new.

“What the Catholic Worker Believes” was taken from the Catholic Worker website www.catholicworker.org.

Our Needs

Winter approaches bringing with it an increase of needs for our unhoused friends. Here’s what we’re looking for to help keep people warm and safe:

- Jackets, Sweatshirts, Coats (all sizes)
- New Underwear (men & women)
- Stocking Caps, Wool Socks, Gloves, etc.
- Blankets
- Sleeping Bags, Tents, Tarps, etc.
- Hand Warmers

If you’d like to donate, we accept porch drop-offs or shipments at:

120 N Erie St
Wichita, KS 67214

Signposts Along the Path

by Patrick McKenzie

Over the years, people have asked me, How do you know you're called to work with the poor? And often I would answer, somewhat glibly, It's the Gospel. And while I still firmly believe that poverty, in one way or another, is an integral aspect of the Gospel message, I have come to realize that this is not what people were asking. We've all heard the Gospel at Church, in Bible Study, or in religion class; we've all heard the story of the Young Rich Man, the Hospitality of Abraham, and the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25, but what I believe people were asking was—what is your particular call to work with the poor.

And it's true, I don't believe that everyone is called to sell all their possessions and strip down naked like St. Francis or send their sister to a convent and head to the desert like St. Anthony. Over the centuries, God has called particular men and women to exhibit the virtue of poverty in a unique way; often, to oppose some vice that maliciously haunts the Church at the time—exuberant wealth, usury, stinginess, etc. And by no means do I claim to be numbered along this lot, but I do believe that God has placed specific experiences in my life that have led me to seek a life of poverty.

One of my earliest memories, and one of the most formative experiences I've had in my life, was when I was just a child, maybe five or six. My grandpa was active in the Church and would devote time each week delivering food to the poor via Meals on Wheels. Many times he would take my brother and me along with him on his route. Seeing my grandpa not only take time out of his week to deliver meals, but encountering people in a concrete, personal way gave me an example early on of charity. It demonstrated to me that charity was

not faceless or impersonal, it was going into someone's home, sitting with them, asking them how they were doing—encountering another person face to face.

Later on in high school, I went on a mission trip to Gallup, New Mexico to serve alongside the Missionaries of Charity and Little Sisters of the Poor. I've never fallen in love with a place so quickly. The witness that the Missionaries of Charity showed with their lives struck a chord deep within my heart that continues to resonate today. Abandoning everything the world had to offer, they sank to the depths of humanity to meet the littlest ones where they were. Their firm resolve to love the poor and quench the thirst of Jesus on the Cross was tangible and visceral. There were no theatrics, no frills; for the Missionaries of Charity, to live out the Gospel meant to empty oneself and

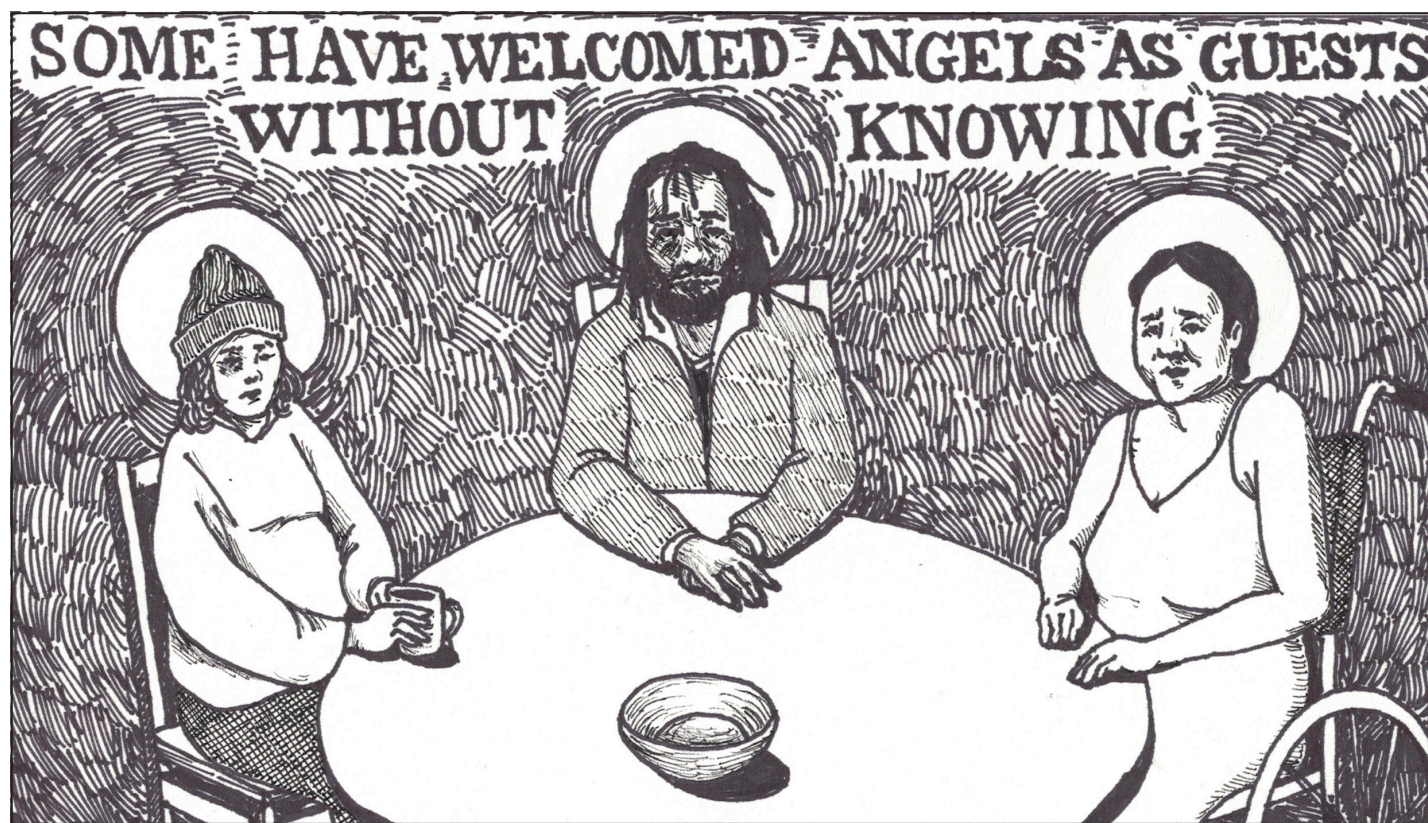
become poor, physically and spiritually. It was there in Gallup I witnessed the vim and vigor with which one could live the Gospel.

The last experience I'll mention, although it is by no means the last, was when I was in Seminary in Chicago. On my weekly trek to the parish I was assigned, Old St. Mary's in the Loop, I had to walk there from Union Station through downtown. Unsurprisingly, I would encounter many people who were homeless on my walk. After a few weeks, I began to bring sack lunches with me to hand out. One day, I saw a young man, probably about my age at the time, digging through a trash can. I approached him and offered him a sack lunch, and he asked if he could bring one to his wife. We walked around the block and there, a young woman wrapped in a blanket, was sitting against a building. The three of us sat on the concrete, passed around three brown paper bags, blessed the food, and ate together. It was in this experience that I learned the importance of not only feeding the poor, but breaking bread with the poor.

Although none of these experiences

on the outside looked extraordinary, they were pivotal moments that acted as signposts for my life. They taught me personalism, the need for encountering our neighbor face to face; voluntary poverty, the need to shed worldly attachment; and community, the need to break bread and live life together.

It is in the Catholic Worker that I have encountered these three lessons in an even more concrete way. Personalism, Voluntary Poverty, and Community are foundational to the philosophy and life of the Movement, demonstrated by the lives of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, and many more that came after them. This is why I felt called to start a Catholic Worker here in Wichita, simply because it is congruent with the formative experiences I have had in my life. It is where the signposts have led me. So, to answer the question posed at the beginning, this is why I believe I am particularly called to this work. Nothing I do is because of me, it has all been demonstrated to me. Nothing I know is from me, it has been taught to me. And nothing I have is mine, it has all been given to me. ■



St. Oscar Romero: *Our Patron Saint*

by Patrick McKenzie

“If we are worth anything, it is not because we have more money or more talent, or more human qualities. Insofar as we are worth anything, it is because we are grafted onto Christ’s life, his cross and resurrection. That is a person’s measure.”

—St. Oscar Romero

Oscar Romero was born in 1917 in Ciudad Barrios, El Salvador. He was ordained a Catholic priest in 1942 and was named Bishop in 1970. After becoming Archbishop of San Salvador, amidst civil unrest and growing violence in the country, Romero was martyred while celebrating the Mass on March 24, 1980.

Opposing the militarized oligarchy in El Salvador, Romero championed the poor and lowly without fear. In his preaching and writing, Romero stressed the importance of the Church’s preferential option for the poor. In a country plagued by inequality and violence, it would have been easy for Romero to side with the rich and powerful. However, he sided with the poor and vulnerable, eventually leading to his death. We hope to show the same courage and fortitude in the face of injustice, and to have no duplicity in our words.

Having been Catholic Workers in Houston at Casa Juan Diego, Oscar

Romero is a special connection for us. Mark and Louise Zwick, founders of the Houston Catholic Worker, lived and worked in El Salvador in the 70s. They returned to the U.S. as the civil war began to rise. As hundreds of El Salvadorian refugees began arriving to the U.S., the Zwicks knew they had to do something, so in 1980 they founded Casa Juan Diego.

If you’d like to learn more about Oscar Romero, we recommend checking out these books:

The Violence of Love: The Pastoral Vision of Archbishop Oscar Romero

The Scandal of Redemption: When God Liberates the Poor, Saves Sinners, and Heals Nations by Oscar Romero

Oscar Romero: Reflections on His Life and Writings by Renny Golden, Marie Dennis, and Scott Wright ■

Thank you!

We are so grateful for having the opportunity to start a Catholic Worker in Wichita, KS. We wish to thank so many that have already supported our community in its effort to live out the Works of Mercy daily. From dropping off water and bananas each week, to donating clothes, to giving monetarily, we are overwhelmed by how willing people have been to give. Thank you to Casa Juan Diego in Houston, TX for the many generous donations as well as the many gifts Mattie and Patrick received during their time as Catholic Workers there. Also, a big thank you to April who has continually and generously guided us in our efforts working with the poor. Lastly, thank you to all who wrote articles for and helped distribute the newspaper. We also know that those we serve are also extremely grateful for all your support.

We still are not sure where God is guiding our efforts though we continue to pray for a house to begin our House of Hospitality. It is our hope that with a House of Hospitality (ideally two, one for women and one for men) we will not only be able to house people who are on the street, but that we will begin to share our lives with the poor in a radical way.

If you would like to donate, please visit our website at www.romerocatholicworker.org or email us at romerocatholicworker@gmail.com. Checks can be made out to “Romero Catholic Worker” and sent to 120 N Erie St, Wichita, KS 67214. Please be advised that we do not have 501(c)3 status as an act of resistance and non-participation as well as to stay true to the grassroots and personalist efforts of the Movement, gifts are not tax deductible. **As always, we ask for your prayers above all.**

Peace in Christ,

The Romero Catholic Worker

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Aims and Purposes

by Dorothy Day

For the sake of new readers, for the sake of men on our breadlines, for the sake of the employed and unemployed, the organized and unorganized workers, and also for the sake of ourselves, we must reiterate again and again what are our aims and purposes.

Together with the Works of Mercy, feeding, clothing and sheltering our brothers, we must indoctrinate. We must “give reason for the faith that is in us.” Otherwise we are scattered members of the Body of Christ, we are not “all members one of another.” Otherwise, our religion is an opiate, for ourselves alone, for our comfort or for our individual safety or indifferent custom.

We cannot live alone. We cannot go to Heaven alone. Otherwise, as Péguy said, God will say to us, “Where are the others?” (This is in one sense only as, of course, we believe that we must be what we would have the other fellow be. We must look to ourselves, our own lives first.) If we do not keep indoctrinating, we lose the vision. And if we lose the vision, we become merely philanthropists, doling out palliatives.

The vision is this. We are working for “a new heaven and a new earth, wherein justice dwelleth.” We are trying to say with action, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” We are working for a Christian social order.

We believe in the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God.

This teaching, the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, involves today the issue of unions (where men call each other brothers); it involves the racial question; it involves cooperatives, credit unions, crafts; it involves Houses of Hospitality and Farming Communes. It is with all these means that we can live as though we believed indeed that we are all members one of another, knowing that when “the health of one member suffers, the health of the whole body is lowered.”

This work of ours toward a new heaven and a new earth shows a correlation between the material and the spiritual, and, of course, recognizes the primacy of the spiritual. Food for the body is not enough. There must be food for the soul. Hence the leaders of the work, and as many as we can induce to join us, must go daily to Mass, to receive food for the soul. And as our perceptions are quickened, and as we pray that our faith be increased, we will see Christ in each other, and we will not lose faith in those around us, no matter how stumbling their progress is. It is easier to have faith that God will support each House of Hospitality and Farming Commune and supply our needs in the way of food and money to pay bills, than it is to keep a strong, hearty, living faith in each individual around us – to see Christ in him. If we lose faith, if we stop the work of indoctrinating, we are in a way denying Christ again.

We must practice the presence of God. He said that when two or three are gathered together, there He is in the midst of them. He is with us in our kitchens, at our tables, on our breadlines, with our visitors, on our farms. When we pray for our material needs, it brings us close to His humanity. He, too, needed food and shelter. He, too, warmed His hands at a fire and lay down in a boat to sleep.

When we have spiritual reading at meals, when we have the rosary at night, when we have study groups, forums, when we go out to distribute literature at meetings, or sell it on the street corners, Christ is there with us. What we do is very little. But it is like the little boy with a few loaves and fishes. Christ took that little and increased it. He will do the rest. What we do is so little we may seem to be constantly failing. But so did He fail. He met with apparent failure on the Cross. But unless the seed fall into the earth and die, there is no harvest.

And why must we see results? Our work is to sow. Another generation will be reaping the harvest.

When we write in these terms, we are writing not only for our fellow workers in thirty other Houses, to other groups of Catholic Workers who are meeting for discussion, but to every reader of the paper. We hold with the motto of the National Maritime Union, that every member is an organizer. We are upholding the ideal of personal responsibility. You can work as you are bumming around the country on freights, if you are working in a factory or a field or a shipyard or a filling station. You do not depend on any organization which means only paper figures, which means only the

labor of the few. We are not speaking of mass action, pressure groups (fearful potential for evil as well as good). We are addressing each individual reader of *The Catholic Worker*.

The work grows with each month, the circulation increases, letters come in from all over the world, articles are written about the movement in many countries.

Statesmen watch the work, scholars study it, workers feel its attraction, those who are in need flock to us and stay to participate. It is a new way of life. But though we grow in numbers and reach far-off corners of the earth, essentially the work depends on each one of us, on our way of life, the little works we do.

“Where are the others?” God will say. Let us not deny Him in those about us. Even here, right now, we can have that new earth, wherein justice dwelleth! ■

Article originally written in 1940 for “The Catholic Worker” newspaper. Reprinted from catholicworker.org

