

The Personalist

Haitians in Harrisburg Are Stuck

By James Murphy

We have met many wonderful Haitian families in our neighborhood and have become friends with quite a few. Inevitably, many conversations revolve around the bleak updates for humanitarian parole and Temporary Protected Status for Haitians. On June 12, 2025, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Kristi Noem, terminated the CHNV program offering humanitarian parole for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans. Two weeks later, DHS announced that Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians would expire in early September. After an agonizing few weeks, a court ruling extended TPS until February 2026. More than 500,000 Haitians currently living in the United States are at risk of being deported, including an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 Haitians in the Harrisburg area. They will also lose their work authorizations, which will force many to lose their jobs which pay for the shelter and living expenses for them and their children.

Many employers fired Haitian employees after the June TPS announcement and, although the program remains intact until February, they have not hired them back. According to the DHS press release, "The environmental situation in Haiti has improved enough that it is safe for Haitian citizens to return home." The statement claims Secretary Noem made this decision with input from other agencies, including the US Department of State: "The Secretary determined that, overall, country conditions have improved to the point where Haitians can return home in safety," the DHS press release announcing this decision stated. Yet the US Department of State currently marks Haiti with a Level 4: "Do Not Travel" advisory on its website. A Level 4 travel advisory is the highest travel warning issued by the State Department. On June 24, the United States Embassy to Haiti posted on X (Twitter) telling Americans not to travel to Haiti, and warning

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Why We Write

The Editors

"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.

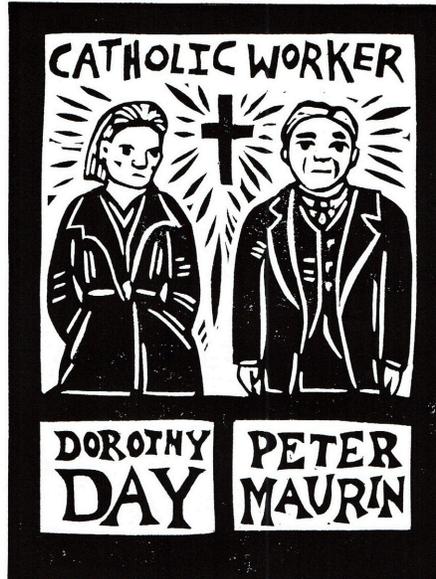
Together with the Works of Mercy, feeding, clothing and sheltering our brothers, we must indoctrinate. We must "give reason for the faith that is in us." Otherwise we are scattered members of the Body of Christ, we are not "all members one of another." Otherwise, our religion is an opiate, for ourselves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

Dorothy Day wrote these words in 1940. 85 years later, we can hardly improve upon them. We write to promote the reconstruction of the social order. Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin started their movement in answer to Pope Pius XI's call to "reconstruct the social order in the image of Christ." Dorothy and Peter believed American society needed a fundamental reordering: the dignity of the person, rather than increase of profit, needed to become the basis of our social order. We have named this publication **The Personalist** because of the guiding philosophy of the Catholic Worker movement: personalism,

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By Sarah Fuller

Sarah Fuller





Why We Write from pg. 1

which advocates for societies that promote the sanctity of each person's dignity and their freedom. Emmanuel Mounier, the author of this philosophy, argued that bourgeois capitalism promoted our individual comfort; Marxism ignored the spiritual nature of the person and reduced all well-being to material goods; and fascism corrupted our spiritual desire for union with God into a lust for power and a worship of the nation-state. In our society, we see how all these lies have shaped different aspects of our economy, politics, and social services, and we strive to build a new society in the shell of the old, that is based on the sacredness of our neighbor rather than efficiency, maximization of profit, government funding, bureaucracy or slowly increasing bank accounts. Rich and poor alike today want to know how to make a good society. We know that we must do better than the violence, exploitation, greed, inequality, war, pollution, and destruction that fill our headlines and cause such suffering. We aim to create a society where it is easier to be good. We write to encourage each other that such a world is possible and to clarify with one another what that world looks like.

Our patron saint, St. Martin de Porres, was called a "gentle agitator" and "revolutionary personalist" in the May 1936 edition of **The Catholic Worker**, and was credited with starting the first Catholic Worker program in the Western Hemisphere. This publication is dedicated to this "gentle personalist," San Martín, who embodied Peter Maurin's call to gentle personalism, to "be what you want the other fellow to be."

We are a small community, doing what we can, and have faith that Jesus will take our small efforts and do the rest. This work of ours, in trying to create "a new earth wherein justice dwelleth" is not ours, but God's and is only done with God's grace, and so we place our faith and love in God first, and then our neighbors, believing that in the neighbor we can see we find the face of the God we cannot (1 John 4:20).✠

"The Catholic Worker believes in the gentle personalism of traditional Catholicism...gentleness that finds its roots in the common doctrine of the common good."

Peter Maurin, *The Catholic Worker*, February 1935 & July 1936

Easy Essay: Blowing the Dynamite

by Peter Maurin

Writing about the Catholic Church, a radical writer says:

"Rome will have to do more than to play a waiting game; she will have to use some of the dynamite inherent in her message."

To blow the dynamite of a message is the only way to make the message dynamic.

If the Catholic Church is not today the dominant social dynamic force, it is because Catholic scholars have failed to blow the dynamite of the Church.

Catholic scholars have taken the dynamite of the Church, have wrapped it up in nice phraseology, placed it in an hermetic container and sat on the lid.

It is about time to blow the lid off so the Catholic Church may again become the dominant social dynamic force.



By Sarah Fuller

Haitian Neighbors continued from pg. 1

Americans who were in Haiti to leave. “Do not travel to Haiti due to kidnapping, crime, civil unrest, and limited health care,” they warned. “Kidnapping is widespread.” A three-year-old child and seven staff members were kidnapped at an orphanage outside Port-au-Prince on August 3.

Does this sound like a safe place to you?

This advisory does not reflect only dangers for foreign travelers. Many Haitians in Harrisburg have shared stories of family members kidnapped, homes burnt to the ground, sexual violence, and murdered family members. To live in Haiti is dangerous and life-threatening for Haitians as well as visitors right now. The violence and political instability have brought in their wake food insecurity, hospitals shuttering, and schools closed indefinitely. We have met Haitian families with young children who are thriving in the United States, while in Haiti, 22% of children under five years of age are chronically malnourished, and a significant percentage suffer from acute malnutrition. Budget cuts to agencies like USAID have only made the problem worse. Families returning to Haiti face food insecurity and limited access to quality education. Haiti is not a place right now where Kristi Noem or Marco Rubio would send their own children.

So why are they sending Haitian children to face malnourishment and death?

In May 1939, the German liner St. Louis sailed from Germany to Cuba. The 937 passengers were almost all Jewish refugees. Cuba's government refused to allow the ship to land. The United States and Canada were unwilling to admit the passengers.

The St. Louis passengers were finally permitted safe passage to Belgium, France and England, rather than return to Nazi Germany. Ultimately, 254 St. Louis passengers were killed in the Holocaust.

TPS was created to save lives, and avoid tragedies like the 254 murdered German-Jews aboard the St. Louis. If we are to send people back to Haiti, we are sending some back to their deaths, others, including children, will lack food and education. Parents will be stripped of the dignity of legally working in the United States and will lack employment and hope of supporting their families after being deported to Haiti.

As a nation, we are repeating the same crime the United States committed in 1939 with the passengers aboard the St. Louis.

For decades, American Christians fought to overturn Roe V. Wade in order to save the lives of the helpless innocent. Will American Christians now stand by and allow our 500,000 new Haitian neighbors to face violence, death, and hopelessness? Will we send children to places we would never dare send our own? ✝



By Ade Bethune

Mama Mary Community Farm

This summer, we hosted seven groups of Joshua Group summer program students each week to visit the farm, which we have christened Mama Mary Community Farm, in honor of Harrisburg's first Catholic Worker—Mary Frecon, affectionately called Mama Mary by her grandchildren and greatnieces and nephews. The students watered, weeded, fed the chickens, planted seedlings, inspected the frames of the two beehives and helped pump water from the 500-gallon rain barrel into our water totes in the garden. The eight raised beds have provided mint, kale, chard, cucumbers, tomatoes and garlic for the soup kitchen and Tuesday Night Dinners at Market Square.

If you'd like to participate in the farm, come for a workday or contribute to our efforts, write to harrisburgcw@gmail.com for more information. You're welcome to stop by for fresh eggs and to say hello! ✝

Our May Speaker Series!

In May, we hosted four speakers exploring the spirituality of the Catholic Worker movement. Our first speaker, Jeffrey Korgen, is the author of *Radical Devotion*, a graphic novel biography of Dorothy Day's life. Korgen coordinated her local cause for canonization in New York City, and he treated our Saturday morning audience to a thorough and beautifully illustrated overview of Dorothy Day's early life before she met Peter Maurin and started the Catholic Worker. Korgen got a taste of Catholic Worker life by helping us humanely dispose of a groundhog the night before his talk. Our next speaker, Carmina Chapp, explored the Benedictine spirituality of the Catholic Worker movement, its foundation in the monastic rhythm of prayer and work, *ora et labora*, that has shaped Benedictine communities for 1,500 years. St. Martin de Porres is an important patron saint for Harrisburg Catholic Worker communities: both the first house in Uptown Harrisburg, founded by Mary Frecon in 1938, and this house in Allison Hill are dedicated to St. Martin, the only Black saint from the Americas recognized by the Catholic Church. St. Martin is the patron saint of interracial people, relationships, and of anti-racism. Nate Tinner-Williams, the founder of the Black Catholic Messenger newspaper, gave a fascinating lecture on the rich history of Black Catholicism in the United States, the eight Black Americans whose official causes for canonization have been opened and the many more whose lives witness to great faith and holiness. Finally, Martha Hennessy, Dorothy Day's granddaughter, visited us to share stories of bringing hope "to the gates of hell." Bishop Timothy Senior of Harrisburg celebrated Mass with us and welcomed Martha. We were grateful to our speakers for traveling from great distances, and we look forward to hosting another series in 2026. 🕯



By Sarah Fuller

The Personalist

A publication of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Worker House, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Editors: Renee Roden, James Murphy

A Culture of Vengeance

By Renée Roden

On July 24, President Trump signed an executive order calling for those experiencing homelessness to be incarcerated and institutionalized "in rehab facilities that don't exist," as one Catholic Worker quipped. When state institutions for the mentally ill shut down, community-based rehabilitation facilities were supposed to take their place. These facilities either do not exist, are woefully understaffed and underfunded for the number of people who need help and healing, or have prerequisites to entry that many people cannot meet.

The Open Door Community in Baltimore recently shared the story of Kenyatta Booze, a man experiencing severe mental illness who was court-ordered into several rehabilitation facilities that had work requirements. When they saw he was incapable of working, they refused him admittance. Mr. Booze died on June 7, 2025.

A 2024 [study](#) by the National Alliance to End Homelessness showed that 86% of Americans did not believe that homelessness would be solved by increased law enforcement or criminalization. President Trump's executive order, which flies in the face of the will of the American majority, underscores what Christopher Douçot called in a recent essay for the **Hartford Catholic Worker** an ethics of vengeance: "*Our vengeful ethic is why we arrest homeless persons for sleeping outdoors.*"

The same study by the National Alliance to End Homelessness revealed that 68% of Americans had never volunteered with or for the homeless. Nearly 800,000 of our neighbors experience homelessness. Yet more than half of our country has not encountered them, practiced a work of mercy for them, or seen Christ in their face. Pope Francis constantly called Christians to create a culture of encounter, "*Not just saying 'what a shame, poor people!' but allowing yourself to be moved with compassion; 'and then to draw near, to touch and to say: 'Do not weep' and to give at least a drop of life'*" (September 13, 2016). How different would our cultural and political rhetoric about the homeless and the poor be, I wonder, if 68% of us stopped, drew near, and encountered them? 🕯



A Catholic Worker Job Description

By Hunter Messner

Experience desired:

- Fluency in English, Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole with the ability to teach.
- Teaching experience with middle schoolers
- Experience with urban farming
- Skills with home improvement and repair
- Extensive experience in commercial and residential kitchens and food service.
- Familiarity with immigration law and legal proceedings.
- Experience with mental health counseling, management, and referral.
- Ecumenical spirit, with a focus on relating to all types of Christians
- Event planning experience
- Discipline in communal and personal prayer.

Responsibilities:

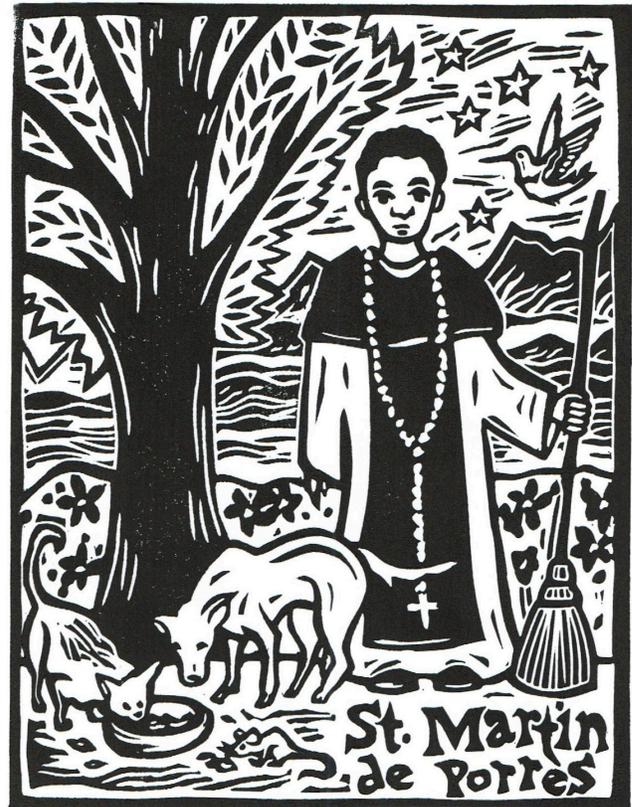
- Accompany individuals on their way to Heaven in the highly diverse neighborhood of Allison Hill.
- Embrace voluntary poverty for your own sanctity and to better help those around you.
- Embrace dignified work in order to manifest your love to your neighbors, and set an example of a joyful life in Christ.
- Deepen your relationship with Christ by encountering him in the poor, mentally ill, the child, the migrant, the addict, the enslaved and the alone.
- Reflect on this each day by setting aside time for personal prayer.
- Praise God in community by attending Mass and praying the Liturgy of the Hours with your fellow workers daily.
- Connect parishioners, workers, and the “least of these” together with prayer, meals, and work.
- Keep your fellow Catholic Workers sane. Enter into conflict when needed, ask for help when needed.
- Share the gospel and the wisdom of the church to all.

Title: Catholic Worker

Location: Harrisburg, PA

Pay: \$0

Direct report: Jesus Christ



By Sarah Fuller

I had the privilege of living at the Harrisburg Catholic Worker for just five weeks and felt like I was more than compensated for my labor. Not long ago, I pursued money so that one day I might be able to retire and enjoy life. There seemed to be many joys to having lots of disposable income. I was so bought into the modern American vision of life that I was prepared to endure slavery (temporarily). I hoped that by squirreling away enough money, I might one day be free to enjoy life to the fullest. Clearly, this is a childish view of work and money, but nothing has made that more clear than my second stay with the Catholic Worker. There is no stagnation when one is working for Jesus. He brings constant growth intellectually, emotionally, spiritually. If work bears no fruit, no amount of difficulty can be endured. Yet, in Allison Hill, though it took serious work to get what I wanted, I was able to jump out of bed each morning ready for the day because I knew I was making a difference and bearing good fruit.



The Personalist

The local parish is right next door. I started each morning with personal prayer followed by mass. On the weekends, I got to join the bilingual choir and serve at mass. During the day I got to help out at Joshua group as a summer program “teacher.” I got to share my math knowledge, hang out with the kids, and hear about their lives. In the afternoons is when I would head over to the soup kitchen and help serve food or simply grab lunch and hang out with the patrons. There was a garden to work in and a house to improve too. In the evenings, there was often a communal meal. I got to show off my cooking skills for anyone that was there to share a meal. We would always finish the day with night prayer. Whoever was present would join in and chant with us.

Besides spending time in conversation and meals, I found that spending time in work and leisure with my neighbors also brought me close to them. Gardening and hiking with Randy, a friend of the house, were some of my favorite moments of the summer. As a Catholic Worker, I felt like I both planted the seed and got to watch it grow. The people I encountered daily became friends and neighbors whom I felt that I had a real impact on. One particular person was B. B largely ignored me for the first few times we met, but eventually warmed up and actually wanted to visit and have conversations. Even though the problems she was experiencing were way beyond my ability to solve, I didn't feel like God was absent or out of reach in her life, but rather present in the suffering. Not every person I met warmed up to me. There were a few other encounters where I felt my relationship with others were stuck in a transactional space. To be honest, I felt like I was being used as a vending machine sometimes. Yet, by experiencing the real hardship of my neighbors, this was easy to forgive. I felt God was present here, too, growing my heart in a different way.

One of the best spiritual fruits came from accompanying the brokenness in my neighbors. I was always smaller and weaker than the problems they faced. Normally, it is all too tempting to solve my own problems, and leave it to state institutions to solve others' problems - ultimately leaving God out of it. When my neighbor's situation is beyond me, and no state institution can help, it becomes a chance to trust in God's love. I found that by turning to God, I was able to become "little" (as St. Therese describes it) and be enlivened by my inability to fix stuff, rather than ashamed.

There was always a soul who desperately needed prayer, and a broken society to ask God to heal.

I was unable to meet all the ways that Jesus was challenging me to grow. He showed me my own smallness of heart when my neighbor, asking for just a little, I turned away. I found that, when confronted with people who couldn't think straight, I was reluctant to get involved in their life, fearing that they would ask something unreasonable from me. Did they? Yes. Was it a problem? No. Yet there was a constant fear that saying yes to a small thing would hurt me down the road. I can be sure of one thing: there is still so much growing to do by encountering Christ in the poor.

I look forward to continuing to serve Christ in the poor and being humbled each time. I have found spiritual growth rewarding, while numbers increasing in a bank account is empty. Why endure wage slavery when I could have deep relationships, meaningful work, and make a difference in the world right now? I think the Harrisburg Catholic Worker is a great place to do this, and I would do it again if given the opportunity.✝

Hunter Messner is a seminarian at St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Thank you, Hunter, for giving so generously to the Catholic Worker and our neighbors this summer!



Tuesday Food Delivery

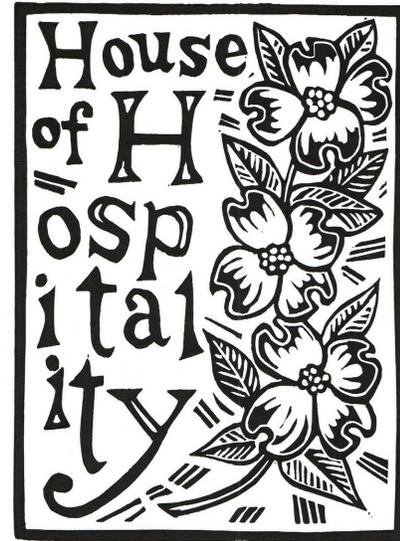
Every second and fourth Thursday, Paul Kisner leads a food distribution to neighbors in Allison Hill who are homebound, elderly, or unable to leave their houses for other reasons. “Jesus leads it,” Paul says, “I just help.”

If you would like to join Paul in assisting Jesus, please write to us at: harrisburgcw@gmail.com. Jesus gives the blessings, and we are blessed to distribute them, as Paul reminds us!✝



House Needs

- Prayers!
- Toilet Paper
- Long Underwear
- Blankets & bed sheets (twin and full)
- Winter Boots
- Canned goods & ramen
- Coffee
- Underwear (men's boxer briefs & women's)
- Socks (men's and women's)
- Bus passes (daily and weekly passes)
- Laundry detergent
- Monetary donations - checks can be addressed to Harrisburg Catholic Worker; online donations via Zelle can be sent to harrisburgcw@gmail.com



By Sarah Fuller

Thank Yous

BL. MARTIN de Porres
help us to love **CHRIST**



By Ade Bethune

Robert Kambic, Pete Tucker; Carolyn Holencik; David Smith; Dean Lackey; Paul and Gloria Kisner; Tom and Emily Owad; Dan Cassidy, Bill Hayes & The University of Notre Dame Club of Harrisburg; St. Paul Seminary and Hunter, James, and Kyle; Heather Funk; Michael and Bethea; Marquise Jones; Revs. Aaron Lynch & Anthony Dill, Carol Fagan & St. Francis of Assisi Church; Laura Ramirez, Luis Medina & St. Francis Soup Kitchen; Michelle Foley; Bishop Timothy Senior; Patti Grady; Lecia Jordan; Emily Hand; Jeannetta Politis; Anthony Dasant and the Joshua Group; Bob Mentzer & Knights of Columbus Council #13100; Rev. Matthew Best; Carmen Finestra; Susan Kelly-Dreiss; Nancy Fitzgerald; Jane Popko; Gregory Baird & Edward Wolfe; Mr. & Mrs. William Christ; St. Joan of Arc Parish; St. Catherine Laboure Parish; Geniene Ronald; Darrel & Kirsten Reinford; Art Williams & Gather the Spirit for Justice; Ben Perez, Rev. Allison Smith and Market Square Presbyterian Church; Deacon Francis and Ann Skorija; Charles Coey; Linda Brindle; Dorothy Grimm; Rick & Irene Woodard; Ann Marie Judson & Pax Christi Harrisburg.

We're so grateful for the many gifts we have received: clothing, food, time, talent, friendship, and the financial, physical, and spiritual support of so many in our community. We have certainly unintentionally omitted many generous names, but please know you are remembered in our prayers. ✠



Easy Essay: Tradition or Catholic Action

by Peter Maurin

The central act of devotional life in the Catholic Church is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the unbloody repetition of the Sacrifice of the Cross.

On the Cross of Calvary Christ gave His life to redeem the world. The life of Christ was a life of sacrifice.

The life of a Christian must be a life of sacrifice.

We cannot imitate the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary by trying to get all we can.

We can only imitate the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary by trying to give all we can.

House Schedule

Tuesdays

8 am Morning Prayer

9: 30 am - Neighborhood Food Run

5:30 pm - Outdoor Dinner at Market Square between Dauphin County Courthouse and Chase Bank

Wednesdays

11 am - 2pm Hospitality Hours: open house, coffee, fellowship, laundry and showers available – all are welcome!

5: 30 pm – Evening Prayer

6: 00 pm – Community Potluck Dinner

8pm – Compline (Night Prayer)

