



The Personalist

A Publication of the Harrisburg Catholic Worker



By Ade Bethune

The War Conference Down the Street

By Rev. Matthew Best

On July 14 and 15, the Carlisle Barracks in Carlisle, PA (where I live) hosted the 2026 Pennsylvania Defense and Innovation Summit. The summit brought together over 500 organizations, military leaders, and executives from defense, tech, and finance companies. President Trump was the keynote speaker for the event. And according to reports, approximately \$10 billion in new investments was announced to support over 4000 jobs in PA. One can only imagine the additional billions of dollars that will eventually exchange hands as a result of the summit in legitimate business deals and financing and contracts.

Humanity has a long history of investing in ways to better kill one another. There's a lot of money to be made in the craft of killing. There always has been. There is nothing new here. We're pretty good at it. But there's always room for more efficient ways to kill apparently.

And let's not forget, war is profitable – very profitable. “Defense” contractors make a whole lot of money making instruments of death. And there's a whole industrial complex that extends far and wide that also benefits from it. And let's be real, the economy does too. There's plenty of jobs that are created. Communities benefit financially. There's suppliers. There's buyers. And investors. And inventors. And whole support networks. War is a big economic reality. And with so much money to be made from it, there is plenty of incentive to have wars and offer support for wars that we aren't directly involved in.

And in all of this, I'm reminded of a section of the Sunday's lectionary from 1 Timothy 6:9-10 – **“But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.**

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.”

If we are ever going to actually be serious about peace rather than just talking about it with an emptiness that no one actually believes we care about, we need to recognize that peace will be very costly if we actually attempted to live into it. Very costly. Peace will mean the end of all of it. All the money, the contracts, the jobs, the economic impact, etc. Or at the very least, actually attempting to live by peace will require major changes to how we operate and invest and work.

Which is why I'm not convinced that we will ever actually attempt to live by the way of peace. It's so much easier to claim to value peace and then disregard the concept without any effort to implement it. Given our current circumstances we have incentivized war. We have made peace a beautiful abstract and a costly reality.

Humanity has a long relationship with violence and war. Humanity also has a long relationship with money. In ancient times, societies even developed gods for these things. I'm not convinced we ever actually gave up those gods. We just stopped naming them as gods. But we still listen to them. We make our decisions based on them. We have values based on them. We order our lives and civilizations around them. If that's not a god, I don't know what is. If we were honest, we'd return to calling them gods. But I won't hold my breath for that either. We seem to be in a time in which honesty isn't in vogue. Then again, I'm not sure humanity has ever had a good relationship with honesty. Humans didn't like prophets primarily

Continued on pg. 6



The Personalist

A publication of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Worker House, 1440 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Website: smartindeporrescw.org

Contact: harrisburgcw@gmail.com

Editors: Renee Roden, James Murphy

A Harrisburg Story

By Dorothy Day

All the Catholic Worker houses of hospitality aim to be poor. They are in the slums but somehow we never get down quite low enough. There are always a few rungs lower to go on the ladder of destitution. Besides when we get through scrubbing and painting or whitewashing, there is a decent look about the Houses which contrasts greatly with other places in the neighborhood. Llewellyn Scott's place in Washington is poverty stricken and dilapidated beyond hope of repair. The building just won't stand it. The house in Philadelphia has an outside toilet, a shanty in back, but, unlike other places in the neighborhood, at least it is not one to be shared with five other houses.

Here in Harrisburg there just isn't any toilet. You go next door to the neighbors. And there was no running water until a week ago. Most of the houses on the block have no running water. The neighbors pay one man down the street for the privilege of getting pails of water from his house.

Our place, the Blessed Martin Home, is two rooms, now scrubbed clean. There is electricity, tables and chairs, magazines to read. There is paint and linoleum on the floor, the linoleum donated out of her salary by a colored cook who works all day and then comes over to help us in the evening.

There is a faucet in the kitchen now, but no sink. We are begging for that.

The women, colored and white, who are engaging in the Catholic Worker activities among the children and families in the neighborhood, are supporting themselves and there is little money to spare. They have to advance little by little, at a snail's pace.

Due to lack of decent living facilities, no one is resident in the house permanently,

continued on pg. 9



By Ade Bethune

Barbarians and Civilized

By Peter Maurin

We call barbarians / people living on the other side of the border. / We call civilized / people living on this side of the border. / We civilized, living on this side of the border, / are not ashamed to arm ourselves to the teeth / so as to protect ourselves / against the barbarians living on the other side. / And when the barbarians / born on the other side of the border invade us, / we do not hesitate to kill them / before we have tried to civilize them. / So we civilized exterminate barbarians / without civilizing them. / And we persist in calling ourselves civilized.



A Church That is "Poor and For the Poor"

This spring, St. Martin de Porres Catholic Worker held a roundtable discussion on the Pact of the Catacombs. The Pact of the Catacombs was a list of 13 points signed by several dozen bishops attending the Second Vatican Council in Rome in 1965. Several of the hundreds of bishops gathered in Rome to discern the direction of the global church became convicted that the church needed to renounce the worldly power and status that it had gained and commit itself to being a church that is "poor and for the poor." The signatories of the Pact of the Catacombs (named because it was signed after Mass in the chapel of the Catacombs of Domitilla) committed themselves to renounce wealth and the appearance of wealth, including rich mansions, gold or jewels, and to instead embrace the lifestyle of "ordinary people." They renounced titles such as "monsignor" or "excellency" and instead embraced the pastoral title of "father" or "Dom." They committed themselves to solidarity with and preferential option for the poor. The text is available online on a website that our friend Stefan Gigacz created: pactofthecatacombs.com.

Although just around 30 bishops and a dozen other synod members signed the document after the Mass in the catacombs six decades ago, the pact spread throughout Latin America, and eventually gained more than 500 signatories.

James sat down with our friend Ray, one of our extended community members who participated in the roundtable discussion and was quite moved by it, to get his reactions. Ray told James:

As I was reading [the Pact of the Catacombs], what was going through my mind, even though I don't go to church all that often, I felt that this was not really being followed.

"We will live according to the way our people live": I don't see that being true for church leaders,

"A church that is poor and for the poor": I don't feel churches are for the poor. If I were at the table with average Christians, because I am poor, and I can't give financially, I don't think a pastor or religious leader would pay much attention to me. It seems that people who have money get the attention of Church leaders.

When I was homeless, I don't think I ever met a priest in the street: to talk with me, pray with me, encourage me. I feel they are more interested in money for their churches.

The pact says that is signed by Catholic Bishops. The word "We" is mentioned in every paragraph. Everything they commit to, it is something they choose to do, not pass along to someone else, but to do it themselves. The Bishops in the United States, as far as I can see, are not living lives that reflect the Pact of the Catacombs.✝



By Sarah Fuller

Haiti: America's Blindness to Justice

By James Murphy

I was looking over pictures taken at a summer event put on for the local Haitian community in Harrisburg. In a group shot, over 40 Haitians are smiling and seem happy. They are mothers, fathers, children, married couples standing along with single men and women. There are cooks, rideshare drivers, social workers, folks employed at warehouses and healthcare workers. Homeowners, taxpayers and responsible and good community members pose for the picture.

Ten children with beaming smiles and unbridled joy are lined up in the front of the group. The kids probably do not feel the pressure, the fear, grief and the sting of rejection the adults in the room have been discussing during the community dialogue. The conversation mostly revolved around the recent Supreme Court's decision to allow the Department of Homeland Security to end TPS for Haitians.

TPS (Temporary Protected Status) is a temporary form of humanitarian relief for people from a designated country, allowing them to remain in the United States legally when conditions in their country of origin make safe return impractical, impossible, or detrimental to local recovery efforts.

Haitians were allowed to enter the United States following the devastating earthquake starting in 2010.

continued on pg. 8



Walking Far for Omar

By John Kelly

News of human tragedies caused by Immigration Customs Enforcement agents has become commonplace as bad weather reports. For many, that news is both heartbreaking and outrageous, and we wonder how such things could possibly happen in this country, and what can be done about them. In May of this year, to protest the treatment of ICE detainees at Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary, my wife, Heather, and I made a 67-mile walking pilgrimage from the prison to St. Patrick's Cathedral in Harrisburg. We are not by nature the kind of people to publicly take up a cause. But we were inspired by a man named Omar, whom we had met in 2025 while volunteering at a soup kitchen where his wife, Laura, is the chief cook. The unimaginable circumstances under which Omar and Laura came to this country, and the inspirational manner in which they built their lives here, made our decision to walk a proverbial no-brainer.

In 2022, Omar and Laura came from Peru to this country to seek asylum after their lives were put to ruin by criminal gangs attempting to extort honest businessmen like Omar, who had his own construction company. Mortal threats of extortion may be hard for most Americans to truly imagine, but they were made very real to Omar and Laura when two of his customers were murdered. After thugs next tried to kidnap their young son, the couple had little choice but to leave Peru. They had no idea that, soon enough, threats by thugs with Federal badges and guns would also be made very real to them.

Omar and his family had the means to fly from Peru to Mexico on the first leg of their journey. When they made their asylum claims at the Mexican/U.S. border, Department of Homeland Security agents thoroughly questioned them regarding the circumstances causing them to seek refuge here. They recounted their experiences, their answers were deemed sufficient, and they were welcomed onto our soil. Their entry was legal then and is legal now.

In September 2022, they came to Harrisburg with little more than the clothes they wore. By happenstance or Providence, they got lost in their new neighborhood while trying to do their laundry and found their way to a Spanish-speaking parish in the area that welcomed them into its community. There they began to build their American lives. Omar eventually found work in a warehouse while Laura began to volunteer at the parish soup kitchen. By the time I started volunteering at the Kitchen in 2025, they and their son were renting a nice home in the city, Omar had been promoted to a position as a trainer at the warehouse and Laura had been named the Kitchen's new chief cook.

Omar drove Laura to the Kitchen every morning and usually stayed for a short time to help out. Recently hospitalized, I had begun to volunteer at the Kitchen as a way of protecting my overly anxious mind from its many unnecessary ruminations about my health. Every day he saw me at the Kitchen, Omar greeted me with a hug and the kind of thump on the back that you get only from bricklayers or linebackers. He asked how I was doing. He said it's good to see you. He said this to everybody and meant it, just like Laura said, "Hello, my friend, how are you?" to just about every downtrodden countenance that appeared before her smiling face in the soup line. The hugs she gave me were gentler than Omar's, but knowing why I was there, she unabashedly would call me "sweetheart" and tell me that she loved me. How does one not become fast friends with people like that? It turned out that Omar and I needed a fast-tracked friendship because within a few months, he was snatched up without warning by ICE and placed in detention. Omar was targeted by ICE after he received a citation in the mail that included a (false) misdemeanor charge of evading authorities. He appeared at a Magistrate's office as the citation instructed, and ICE agents were waiting. Later, after the District Attorney's office saw the incontrovertible evidence proving his innocence, they immediately dropped the citation. But by then it was too late. In reality, Omar had not been taken by ICE because he had been accused of a crime. He had been detained simply because he and Laura had entered the country as asylum-seekers. The current President finds asylum-seekers to be merely former "shithole"-dwellers: not persons in the eyes of the Constitution and not holding the same inalienable rights to which all the former European-shithole-dwellers populating the New World in 1776 were entitled. ICE's theft of Omar from our midst was as if there had been some evil Rapture, where one was taken and others were left. Heather and I were left stunned along with all of Omar and Laura's many friends. In immigration proceedings, DHS makes all the rules, so no matter the lawyers retained and motions filed, you wait. And wait. *Y esperar. Y esperar....* During the endless waiting, we learned about Jaimee Martinez, who walked from Pittsburgh to the Moshannon Valley Processing Center in Phillipsburg to raise awareness of the atrocious conditions there. That trek struck Heather as worthy of imitation, and soon she was contacting Catholic churches along routes between Lewisburg to Harrisburg seeking hospitality for us on our walk. Within two weeks, friends had loaned us backpacks, 4



churches had extended overnight hospitality, and community organizers planned a vigil outside the federal Lewisburg to bless the beginning of our trek to the Cathedral in Harrisburg.

Most of our journey was through beautiful countryside and towns— areas commonly known to be quite “red” in the red-blue wars. I carried sandwich boards saying “Walk Far for Omar,” and the honks and beeps we heard began almost immediately during the first miles into Lewisburg. The group who had gathered for the vigil accompanied us to an evening church service, and cars stopped to let us all cross roads. People smiled and waved. We had not at all been sure what kind of reception our walk might receive, but the first miles were very heartening. MAGA minions seemed in short supply that day.

During our ensuing four days’ journey, we were greeted by many people. On a hot day, we approached a round-shouldered woman in a sundress on the porch swing of her old rowhouse. She said hello and asked us “Who is Omar?” She seemed surprised that ICE detainees were being held at “the Big House” (as Lewisburg Penitentiary is locally known) and how he got there. In the end, she was visibly moved and promised to pray for him. A half-mile on, a curious grandma driving down a street braked and then backed up to ask about this Omar we were walking for in this ridiculous heat. She, too, seemed surprised to learn of immigration detainees being held in Lewisburg. She, too, promised to pray for him.

But not everyone was friendly. A man outside a grocery store asked “who’s Omar?” in a tone that sounded like he was not asking out of concern for his fellow man. When I responded, “He’s my brother,” he gave me a surprised look but didn’t say another word. Another man honked his horn to call attention to the bird he flipped as he sped past. A third, barely visible to us behind some rusting cars across the highway, yelled “Omar sucks.” Probably I should have crossed the road to ask him how he happened to know Omar and what our friend had ever done to him. But the pavement was hot, the miles were long and admittedly I figured a Q and A would not much help our Omar get freed.

As we walked, I wondered whether the name “Omar” on my signs would prompt any assumption that he is Hispanic. After watching us approach, a thin young man with tattoos and a ponytail walked down his gravel driveway to meet us while a young woman and a baby waited at the car. He gave us five one-dollar bills and said he hoped it would help. He apparently didn’t feel the need to inquire of Omar’s ethnicity. Neither did a retired farmer sitting in the shade of his garage, who called us over and trotted in a side door to get us ice-cold water. Neither did a burly, bearded man ten miles down the

road who came out of a convenience store, gave us blue Gatorade bottles and gruffly said, “It’s hot. You guys stay hydrated.” The sum of these encounters and others like them gave me this thought: our country was founded on principles that all people are created equal and that in important decisions, the majority generally knows best. On our trek we encountered much more sympathy, encouragement and compassion for Omar than we did opposition. It seemed to me that the majority spoke.

If the majority of us humans choose kindness and empathy, then our current leaders have rejected our collective wisdom and, indeed, are hostile to it. They tell the woman on the porch and the grandma in the car, the young dad with a ponytail, the old farmer outside his garage and the burly man gifting quarts of Gatorade that their human compassion is of no value, that it is meaningless or naïve or just plain stupid.

I have to believe that a majority of us would be disgusted and ashamed if we could witness for ourselves how our fellow human beings are being treated in our detention centers. I realize that my belief is based on an extremely small “survey” and completely anecdotal information. So maybe I am wrong. One thing I’m confident about is this: if in fact most of our citizenry believes that what ICE is doing is right and just, and if they are representative of our nation’s citizenry as a whole, then our nation has truly lost its ability to tout itself as exceptional, lost its claim to the high road, lost its credibility with the world.

Omar remains in Lewisburg prison as of this writing. And unlike him, I am right now living my own little version of the American Dream. So I play my golf and drink my beer and I get sucked into that imposter of peace known as complacency. And I forget about our friend’s American Nightmare until his wife tells me in tears that he did not call her at his usual time, or that the prison still hasn’t gotten him the testing he needs for the cancer that may be in his bones, or that one of his fellow captives went ahead and ate the moldy bread he was given and then threw up all night long. And then I am slapped back into reality.

But Laura and their son continue to be without husband and father. I have no idea how many people noticed Heather and I on our walk, or how many of them paused to wonder who and what Omar and his plight might be. But Omar’s story is not unique, and the people missing him are far from alone. Amid the daily duties, dramas, of diversions of our lives, we cannot forget the tens of thousands of human beings whose lives are being ruined by thugs with Federal badges and guns acting on our behalf every day. In some small way, however we can, for the sake of all those people and for ourselves as a nation, each of us needs to walk far for Omar. ✠



"war conference" from pg. 1

because the prophets named reality and the people preferred the lie they told themselves. A colleague sent me a video of an interview Bono (the U2 lead singer) did with Eugene Peterson (who translated the Bible into The Message). In this fascinating conversation between two men of deep faith, one point that struck me was Bono talking about how he distrusts Christians because they are often not dealing with reality. The world is a violent place, he said. And scripture captures that violence as real. And offers a way to deal with it.

I think good news is good because it deals with reality. I once heard a colleague say that hope deals with reality. Not sugarcoating it. And then offers a way forward that reminds us that God is moving us along a different path. I think good news is like that.

It reminds me of what Martin Luther said about the theology of the cross in the Heidelberg Disputation from 1518. He wrote:

"A theology of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theology of the cross calls the thing what it actually is."

So much of what passes for Christianity these days is actually just the theology of glory. It either ignores the evil or sugar coats it or just willfully twists it so that it is not recognizable. Let me be clear about that because what I just wrote can easily be twisted as well. I'm not talking about the culture wars and individual moral rules that a society has determined as the norm. I'm talking about reality that we willfully turn our heads away from.

The reality of homelessness in the world's richest nation in history. The reality of an epidemic of loneliness in a world that is more technologically connected than ever. The reality of human trafficking. The reality of domestic violence. The reality of xenophobia that has plagued this country since before it was a country. The reality of racism, and misogyny, and homophobia. The reality of poverty. The reality of gun violence. The reality of preferred ignorance. The reality of pollution and environmental destruction. The reality of greed. The reality of an addiction to certainty and imposing beliefs on others. That's not even scratching the surface of the reality we inhabit. But instead of looking at reality and dealing with it, we seem more concerned with laying blame, finger pointing, forcing compliance, believing we can twist reality the way we want, living in a fantasy world, and more.

You want the world to be a better place? Start by looking at reality and see it for what it is. It's the starting point. Then receive hope that the reality doesn't have to be the end of the story. It's not set in stone. It will only remain as it is so long as we pretend it isn't there and keep holding onto our fantasy world as if it were real. It's not.

Peace is costly. Very costly. And the cost is more than just

economic. The cost is letting go of how the world operates and our false sense of control over ourselves, others, and the world around us.

Peace isn't the absence of conflict. Peace is the world and all in it being in right relationship with one another. And when that's the case, there is no need to impose. There is no need to profit off of violence and war. There is no need to see us and them.

There is no need. There is just peace. It's not a fantasy. It's not that the world will be perfect. It's that we'll see it as it is and actually deal with it. It's the cost. The cost of leaving the way we do things behind. The cost of recognizing that our assumptions about normal are anything but normal. The cost of embracing a world that we don't know how to live in, but are willing to learn. ✝

Originally published at: pastormatthewbest.com.

BL. MARTIN de Porres
help us to love CHRIST



By Ade Bethune



House Notes

By The Editors



Getting to the Church on Time

This summer has been an unbelievable race to what feels like the joyful “finish line” of James’ and Renée’s wedding on August 15. But, really, a wedding is just another starting line, isn’t it? Don’t tell us that until we’re back from the honeymoon. We’re so grateful that we can celebrate our love together with community from near and far—it’s community that makes this all possible! We’re especially grateful to the community members who will keep the house and farm humming along while we’re on our honeymoon and enjoying some much-needed rest.

Summer Farm Club

Once again, we hosted more than 100 Joshua Group students at Mama Mary Community Farm this summer to learn about compost, watering, harvesting and planting seeds. The farm club is part of the Joshua Group’s summer program for its elementary and middle school students, and James helped out at the summer club, floating between classrooms each week. Renée managed the farm club and introduced the farm club students to the St. Francis Soup Kitchen, where they helped with meal prep, gathered compost, and rounded out their “farm-to-table” experience with the help of the chef, Laura. And, as always, the chickens were the star of the farm club, a perennial hit with the students. In a true act of grace, all 10 chickens have survived and continue to produce nearly 200 eggs a month that provide for us and our neighbors.

Josephine “Jo” Grella was a great help as our summer intern in May and June, helping with hospitality, farm club, and working with a variety of neighbors. Katy Ann Chambers (Notre Dame class of 2026) dropped by in June for a day of hospitality and ended up getting a job at Joshua Group’s summer program as well. We wish Katy Ann the best as she begins medical school at the University of Maryland, and we’ll miss her fluent Spanish and willingness to plunge a toilet without even being asked!

We’re partnering with Dickinson College to bring more “Worker-Scholars” out to the house and farm next summer, and we’re excited to cultivate our relationship with them. James harvested a bumper crop of garlic this year, thanks to seed garlic from Dickinson College Farm—we hope our future endeavors will reap as much good fruit!

Supporting our Immigrant Neighbors

Although this summer has not been filled with headlines like last summer, boasting of national guard deployments and “shock and awe” ICE raids, there has been a

devastating surge of ICE arrests and detentions this summer. More than 43,000 immigrants across the country were arrested by ICE in July. The fallout of this quiet “surge” has been felt across Harrisburg. On July 1, an ICE agent—without uniform, in an unmarked car—shot a car in our neighborhood, on 17th Street, as the man was attempting to flee. As Justin Douglas, County Commissioner, said in a statement in response: “Fleeing is not punishable by death.” We pray for an end to violence in our streets, particularly the violence caused by the state tasked with caring for public safety.

Friends of the house continue to be impacted by ICE. Our friend E.’s husband was arrested by ICE in the middle of their custody battle with Child and Youth Services of Dauphin County. According to E., the ICE officers who arrested her husband followed him from their home and had knowledge of the fact that he had an open case with Child and Youth. We were part of a neighborhood group supporting E. and her family and ultimately helped reunite her with her four beautiful children. A large community effort ensued to reunite the family, torn apart by deportation when E.’s husband was deported to El Salvador. We are so grateful for Lisa, her sister Cindy, and the Holy Spirit Migrant Justice Ministry for accompanying E. and her children to Mexico and to Dawn and the Houston Catholic Worker community for generously helping with the travel costs.

In his 1993 encyclical, **Veritatis Splendor**, Pope John Paul II lists deportation as one of many “intrinsically evil” actions that offend the dignity of the human person. In the case of E. and her children, we saw the ways in which the state deploys deportation to attack the dignity and sanctity of the family. We saw E.’s children’s own well-being become collateral damage in the war against immigrants currently underway in our country. What sort of nation are we when we set aside the well-being of children for the sake of politics or ideology?

We are full of sorrow for our Haitian neighbors and we have been praying that the Senate will extend Temporary Protected Status for Haitians until 2029. We’re grateful to Robenson Siquette, SJ, for providing pastoral support to the Haitian Harrisburg community from afar. We have been treated to magnificent hospitality from our Haitian friends—including winning World Cup parties despite Haiti’s losses—and we pray our country can continue this same life-giving hospitality to our Haitian friends. ✠



"Haiti" from pg. 4

While the rubble from the earthquake has been removed, political instability and gang violence have grown in its place and left the capital, Port-au-Prince, one of the most dangerous areas in the Western hemisphere. The United States State Department has given Haiti its highest-level advisory of Level 4 accompanied by the words: **Do Not Travel**. This is the highest travel warning given by the US Department of State. Travel to Haiti is unsafe for Americans, but for the children in the picture, it has been deemed safe.

We don't know when Haitians will be forced back to a country that, in most ways, is worse off than when they left. Bishop Cahill, chairman of the Committee on Migration for the United States Catholic Bishops Conference, issued a statement following the court's decision:

"Revoking the legal status of hundreds of thousands of people residing in our country creates a moral crisis when returning to their country of origin is not a safe or reasonable option. If we are truly to affirm the God-given dignity of every human person, we as a nation cannot turn a blind eye to such an injustice and the impossible choices it will create for families and communities....Even if the Administration determines TPS is no longer warranted, deferred enforced departure remains a tool available to the President, and we urge him to exercise right judgement in this way. Forcibly sending families to dire conditions is a legacy all leaders should seek to avoid."

What can you do for the families who were all together smiling in the picture with us this summer? Call Pennsylvania's U.S. Senators immediately to urge them to co-sponsor and vote YES on Senate Bill 4814 (S. 4814) to extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti through 2029. Contact Senator John Fetterman at (202) 224-4254 and Senator Dave McCormick at (202) 224-6324. ✕

Mutual Aid Stories to Make You Smile

By Renée Roden

Moving Crew

How many people do you know who would take four hours out of their day to move someone they have never met to a new apartment? I know five, to be exact, and they helped our dear friend Heather and her emotional support cat Loyal into a new subsidized apartment.

Concierge Service

About twice as many people helped our neighbor T, her husband, and her three boys stay fed and housed when they had a leak in their apartment that mandated a move. Although the hotel they stayed in was designed for tight budgets in mind, our crew proved that neighbors showing up with pizzas, hot food, and trash removal chutzpah are better than room service any day.

80-Years-Young!

In a heat wave, our extraordinary friend, Dan Cassidy (Notre Dame, Class of '59), sweated up a storm with James making our neighbor's home inspection-ready for a state agency. Given a ladder and a few cold Coca-Colas, there's no fix-it too small for these gents. ✕



By Sarah Fuller

"I think of the good, decent, peace-loving people I have known by the thousands, and I wonder. How many of them are so afflicted with the wasting disease of normalcy that, even as they declare for the peace, their hands reach out with an instinctive spasm ... in the direction of their comforts, their home, their security, their income, their future, their plans—that five-year plan of studies, that ten-year plan of professional status, that twenty-year plan of family growth and unity, that fifty-year plan of decent life and honorable natural demise. "Of course, let us have the peace," we cry, "but at the same time let us have normalcy, let us lose nothing, let our lives stand intact, let us know neither prison nor ill repute nor disruption of ties." And because we must encompass this and protect that, and because at all costs—at all costs—our hopes must march on schedule, and because it is unheard of that in the name of peace a sword should fall, disjoining that fine and cunning web that our lives have woven, because it is unheard of that good men should suffer injustice or families be sundered or good repute be lost—because of this we cry peace and cry peace, and there is no peace. There is no peace because there are no peacemakers. There are no makers of peace because the making of peace is at least as costly as the making of war—at least as exigent, at least as disruptive, at least as liable to bring disgrace and prison and death in its wake."

Dan Berrigan, SJ, **No Bars to Manhood**



"Tale of Two Capitals" from pg. 2

but different families have been given the use of the place as a temporary lodging—two white families with thirteen and seven children respectively and one colored family with seven children. How they got along in two rooms with no water and no toilet is hard to understand. But these families had been evicted in the quiet, orderly way Harrisburg, capital of Pennsylvania, has of doing such things. A moving van drives up to the door, the furniture is carted out and put in storage. The family is turned into the streets to roam around until some welfare agency or relief bureau takes the case up and resettles them. Then they pay for moving into their next place. In one case the children were rolled out of bed and left in their night things as the clothes and bedding were loaded on the van. Even the ice box with some food in it was taken. Neighbors sheltered the evicted family.

Our house sheltered Lucille, too. Lucille was a colored girl, twenty-three years old. She was found dying in an empty house by Mary Frecon, who is our Harrisburg representative. Lucille grew up on the streets. She and her brothers and sisters just prowled around, living as best they could. For the last few months, ravaged with syphilis and drink, Lucille had been cared for by an old colored man who lived in an abandoned shed down an alley. He gave her his cot—that and a chair were the only things he had—and he waited on her as best he could. But the flies were eating her alive, huge horse flies, and in her agony she crawled out and sought shade and relief in an abandoned house next to ours where another old colored man had taken refuge. He too took care of her—they know the uselessness of appealing to agencies—until the neighbors told Mary about it. She found her moaning and crying and trying to beat away the flies that fastened themselves on her open sores.

The few women who carry on the Catholic Worker activities here brought her into their clean little rooms and there they tried to take care of her. Not a hospital in Harrisburg would have her and it was only after five days that Dr. Boland got an ambulance from Steelton (they could not get one at Harrisburg) and sent her to the House of the Good Shepherd at Philadelphia where they deposited her without a word and with no papers about her case. The House of the Good Shepherd is not a hospital, but it is for such girls as Lucille had been. So they took her in, nursed her, and there she died not many weeks later.

While she was lying over in the Catholic Worker house she had been baptized and anointed by Father Kirchner of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Harrisburg is full of Lucilles and a few visits to the slums

there can explain why. After we visited the children and some of the neighbors at 1019 Seventh Street tonight, we went across the street to Mrs. Wright. She lives in a rickety two-storied house, owned by the city and completely out of repair. The banisters are falling down and the steps are unsafe. Here in the only two habitable rooms, she, her seven children, her husband, and another woman have refuge. They have three beds and they all sleep in one room. The kitchen is only big enough for the stove, the table and a few chairs.

Mrs. Wright sat there with her youngest baby, six months old, on her lap. He is thin and moans constantly. He has had pneumonia and whooping cough. One house burned down around him and the other day the whole ceiling came down upon his crib. He has lived through these six months, but from the look of him he will not live much longer, poor baby. And God knows he will be happier dead. It is hard to see the look of settled sadness on the faces of the others.

Mary Frecon and Jean Records tried to clean the place up for them. They went in with pails and mops and with cold water and plenty of soap they scrubbed and scoured. But it didn't show. The hot foul air caught at our throats as we went in, and half strangled us.

Mary Frecon, married and with a family to look after, is not able to live in the House of Hospitality at Harrisburg, but she has certainly made her home another Catholic Worker unit. Right now she has a young woman with two small babies, one and three years old, living with her. She picked them up at one of the evictions she was covering. The girl's husband has abandoned her and she has endured great hardships. There were even nights before her second baby was born that she sat out on doorsteps all night. For the last year or so she had been making her home with other poor families and working for them. The greatest difficulty in Harrisburg is to find a home to live in, even when a family is on relief and has money to pay rent. Housing seems to be the greatest immediate problem of the city. But thanks to Mary Frecon and the Harrisburg Housing Association which she has built up (it is an interracial group) there is now \$1,800,000 available for housing projects and half of it is going for the Negro. Not much, but something to start on. Mary is interested in projects which will enable the residents to have land where they can raise their own food, but it will take a great fight to put that over. But she is a fighter, and we are hoping that her efforts will see to it that this new housing is for the truly poor and not just for middle class salaried workers, as it usually is.✠

Originally published in 1939 in Commonweal.



The Personalist

Thank Yous

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. Thank you to everyone for your support! 🙏

House Needs

- Prayers!
- Rice and beans
- Cooking oil
- Coffee
- Underwear (men's **boxer briefs only** & 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 are via Zelle to harrisburgew@gmail.com or scan the QR Code!



House Schedule

Mondays

8 a.m. Morning Prayer

Tuesdays

8 a.m. Morning Prayer

9: 30 a.m. - Neighborhood Food Run

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

Wednesdays

8 a.m. Morning Prayer

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

Thursdays

Monthly roundtable discussion. Email harrisburgew@gmail.com or visit <https://stmartindeporrescw.org> for more information.



St. Martin de Porres Catholic Worker
1440 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17103

