

MANNA

in The wilderness

Christmas 1993

The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

Vol. 8, No.2

CHRIST'S PRESENCE IN THE WORLD

Through Generous Gifts of Self

Dear friends,

Gary and I are pleased to announce our engagement to marry in June 1994. Upon careful reflection we have decided to take a sabbatical following our wedding. We have each been part of the Catholic Worker movement for many years and hope to continue on this path in years to come. Our hope is to have time to replenish and gain clarity and direction for the way we are being invited to live the Catholic Worker vision in our married life.

We are now working to create a solid plan for the continuation of our ministries in Las Vegas during our time away. *We appeal to any persons interested in assisting with a plan to caretake our hospitality house or help in the continuation of our soup line.* The final arrangement will be shared in our spring newsletter. I am confident that with the efforts of our community of support, the witness of the Catholic Worker will continue in Las Vegas during our absence.

We are still serving at least 7,000 meals monthly, and we expect the numbers to increase this winter as they have each year. Your generous sharing is an important part of this monthly miracle of

"loaves and fishes". We

depend on your financial

assistance, prayers, and

moral support to

sustain the

presence of

the Las Vegas

Catholic

Worker.

Christ's peace to you this
Christmas,

The Las Vegas Catholic
Worker community

Julia Occhiogrosso

Julia Occhiogrosso

Gary Cavalier

Gary Cavalier



CHRIST OF THE HOMELESS (1982) BY FRITZ EICHENBERG

A Rehearsal for the Kingdom of God

I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year.

-Ebenezer Scrooge
A Christmas Carol

by Jonathan Parfrey

The wait is over. On December 25th, at the pre-dawn hour of 4 a.m., the Catholic Worker community will rise to prepare its Christmas meal. Yet, in so many ways this day will be like others. I'm fairly certain we'll worry about fights, about having the right number of volunteers, about having enough food. Yet, this day shall be unlike all others—for it celebrates Christ's birth. The wait is over. Today, we are able to serve a feast, we are able to see Christ face to face.

It has been the foundation of Catholic Worker theology that Christ walks among us, in fact, stands in our soupline. And at Christmas, we who long for peace and justice, sense Christ so much more keenly. For it is the one day in the year when Americans unabashedly sing of peace, where traditional values are acknowledged and cherished, where overflowing charity is considered norm. It is the one day Christians slightly resemble Christians.

Our society exhibits two forms of charity at Christmas. One is the Santa Claus method: appearing miraculously, bearing gifts and donations to "good children," then just as miraculously disappearing. The other way of giving closely follows that less popular Christmas figure, Jesus Christ. Christ came in flesh to give in flesh. Certainly, gifts and donations are worthy, but through Christ we learn of a gift of far greater value—oneself. A check to the Catholic Worker is of great value (as well as needed and appreciated), but how much more valuable is the hand that wrote it. Still greater is the hand that breaks bread



with the poor and hungry. Bill Lane exhorts, "We must be drawn into a more intimate and continuous contact that is conducive to sharing ourselves with the less fortunate as equals."

It is this sense of "sharing ourselves" which brings so many volunteers on Christmas morning. Being with the waiting men and women is one of the most blessed experiences of a lifetime. On the face of it, there's not too much to get excited about. But you can hear the Christmas carols blaring out of a borrowed stereo, propped up on an old car. Unlike other days, the conversation is high-pitched, everyone is speaking with everyone else. Transvestite, drug addict, laborer, refugee, thief, and victim gather in the darkness and commiserate. The line is this morning a beacon, and dark steps from every direction join this animated presence waiting for a meal. Differences are forgotten. This patiently awaited Christmas feast represents the feast of abundance they—the poor—have so long

been denied. It symbolizes the feast that is to come. Our line this morning is a rehearsal for the Kingdom.

Bill Lane, in "The Christian and Materialism," writes:

We go to the oppressed and we become one with them because that is where we find Christ in a unique and redemptive way. . . Christ is in our world as one who is hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, imprisoned. We must seek him out and share with him whatever we have of food, drink, friendship, clothing, health, and freedom. This is the concrete opportunity that beckons each of us to lose our life . . . and find it.

Jonathan Parfrey was part of the Catholic Worker movement over 12 years. He currently works for Nevada Desert Experience.

All who believed were together, and had all things in common and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

—Acts 2:44

Income (Jan-Oct 93)

	JAN 1- OCT 31	AVERAGE /MONTH
DONATIONS	\$18,869	\$1,887
T-SHIRTS	285	29
TOTAL	\$19,154	\$1,915

Expenses (Jan-Oct 93)

SOUPLINE	\$11,542	\$1,154
HOUSE, UTILS.	3,841	384
MISC AID	2,260	226
COMMUNITY*	2,528	253
VAN EXPENSES	2,974	297
SUPPLIES, ETC	2,919	292
TOTAL	\$26,065	\$2,607

Balance Sheet (1993)

	JAN 1 '93	OCT 31
CASH	\$ 1,074	\$ 323
CHECKING	3,322	1,481
SAVINGS	10,129	5,810
TOTAL	\$14,525	\$7,614

*The Catholic Worker community is a volunteer community, each member receiving a weekly "salary" of \$10. Because of this and because we receive donations of food and other resources, we are able to keep costs low.

NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE PRESENTS-

Why We Can't Wait

A lenten weekend of reflection and witness at the Nevada Test site, Mar. 10-13, '94. N.D.E. (702) 646-4814

CHRISTMAS MEAL

We'll be serving close to 500 meals Christmas morning, we need boneless cooked hams by December 22

ADVENT SERVICES

Wednesday nights at 5:30 p.m. at our Hospitality House, potluck following

PLEASE JOIN US:

Tuesday-Saturday, 6:00 a.m.
Morning Prayer at the house.
Tuesday-Saturday, 6:30 - 7:30 a.m.
Serve breakfast at E and Washington St. to 200+ homeless persons.
Wednesday 5:30 p.m. Mass or Liturgy at Catholic Worker house, potluck following.
Friday, 7:00 a.m.
Hospitality Day. We bring up to 10 people home from the soupline for showers, lunch, conversation.
(Our home is also home to 3-4 guests who were formerly homeless)

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