

MANN A *in the wilderness*

June 2014

The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

Volume 28, Number 4

SALAD FOR THE SOUL

by Julia Occhiogrosso

The Brooklyn accent made him familiar to me in an instant. It could have been my father, my uncle or the countless relatives who surrounded my childhood days in Flatbush. It was Jack Davis, a transplant from Bensonhurst, who found his way to the Catholic Worker soup kitchen through his activities with the Knights of Columbus. When the Knights of Columbus began a monthly commitment to a pancake breakfast for the soup line seven years ago, Jack was soon a loyal participant. His monthly commitment grew and we



From left to right: Jack Davis, Lori Gabriel, Lillian Camacho, Tom Brooks, Paul Espinoza.

began seeing Jack every Friday, spaghetti day at the soup line. It was here where Jack offered to balance out the high carb meal with his salad making skills. Fresh fruits and greens are hard to come by for the homeless. This would be an appreciated addition to the menu.

Each week Jack spends a few days on the salad making project. He shops for the veggies: tomatoes, carrots, celery, onions, and cucumbers. Then he meticulously dices the items into bite-sized pieces and packs them into his refrigerator in Tupperware containers. On Thursdays Jack's buddy Frank delivers the lettuce and salad dressing. Often he brings enough fruit for the soup line as well.

On Friday mornings Jack arrives at the Catholic Worker at 5 a.m. His shopping bags of chopped goodies in hand, he is joined by his helpers (dubbed Jack and the Jack-ettes) to chop lettuce and toss all the fixings into a tasty side.

His jovial manner and Vaudeville timing makes Jack the funny man around the chopping block. His quick wit and uncanny affection for cornball humor keeps everyone chuckling and vying for more laughs. The playful crew has grown to bring together members of St. John Neumann, St. Anthony of Padua, and

St. Joseph Husband of Mary. They include members of the Knights and parish youth ministries. Whether they are sponsoring food and clothing drives or showing up at 6 a.m. to help us serve, together they bring a spirit of generosity and service that hallmarks the best of Catholic parish life.

Feeding the hungry is a sacred task, a sacrament that when performed with joy and caring transforms a simple side dish into a banquet for the soul. Whether from Brooklyn or Arizona, Las Vegas or Pittsburgh, we are grateful to all our

volunteers who come to partake in the banquet.

“Feeding the hungry is a sacred task, a sacrament that when performed with joy and caring transforms a simple side dish into a banquet for the soul.”



Evelyn Nicholson “cutting up” at the chopping block.

Sr. Klaryta Antoszezewska, OSF, April 14, 1932 - March 17, 2014



Sr. Klaryta tries persuading a Nye County Sheriff to join the protestors at the Nevada (Nuclear Weapon) Test Site in 2007.

Photo by Mario P. Intino, Jr.

We mourn the passing of Sr. Klaryta in March. She was a friend and volunteer with the Catholic Worker and a great help to immigrants and refugees in Las Vegas through the Sisters of Saint Francis So-

cial and Refugee Program.

In March, we had a memorial ceremony in the front yard and placed a granite memorial in honor of Sr. Klaryta and Sr. Rosemary Lynch, OSF. Sr. Klaryta (Ida Antoszezewska) was born April 14, 1932. She died March 17, 2014 at Marian Convent, Santa Maria, CA.

At a young age her family moved to Lodz, Poland, where a younger brother, Chesla, and sister, Wanda, were born. During the Holocaust her doctor father Wladystaw was sent to Siberia and her mother, Maria, was captured and killed so that 12 year old Ida assumed responsibility for her younger siblings.

At the end of the war the children were separated: her brother off to Siberia in search of their father and her sister adopted by a Dutch couple. At the age of 20 she entered religious life with the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity in Orlik and was given the name Sister Klaryta.

Sr. Klaryta studied theology, languages and philology. One of her teachers, Karol Józef Wojtyła, would later become Pope John Paul II. In the 1960s she was sent to Rome where she worked at the Vatican in the Office of Peace and Justice. In 1976 she accompanied Sr. Rosemary Lynch, of the same religious community, to Las Vegas where they established the Sisters of Saint Francis Social and Refugee Program. Sister Rosemary would wander out to the desert adjoining the 1,350 square mile nuclear test site near Las Vegas where she prayed for an end to the nuclear blasts that took place there an average of every 18 days. Sr. Klaryta joined her there as a new anti-nuclear movement was born.

A Legacy of Courage and Compassion

by Sr. Klaryta Antoszezewska

I was ten years old, living in Vilno with my parents, younger brother and baby sister. It was near the end of December, 1942 when a group of Nazi soldiers broke into our home and ordered us to leave our living quarters at once. At the head of the stairs, one soldier violently struck my mother across the small of her back with the butt of his rifle, knocking her down the full length of the stairway and injuring her so gravely that she died some days later. She was thirty-nine years old. Her tragic death ended a lifetime of love, goodness and generosity towards all in need.

The considerable wealth of our family was seen by my mother as a means to serve and help those who had less. The cruel years of the war brought out the full nobility of her spirit. The tremendous horror of the war was played out completely in our city of Vilno. One of my early recollections is that of being hurried along the street, my mother covering my eyes so that I could not see the bodies of those hanged the previous night dangling from the trees.

Throughout the war food was very scarce and was obtainable only in exchange for valuables. Consequently, many people had none at all, having nothing to exchange for the priceless commodity. When my mother, even with great difficulty, succeeded in obtaining food in exchange of some garment or jewel she still had, this food was not for our family alone but was to be shared.

It was precisely at the time this situation prevailed that the Jews of Vilno were

taken, street by street, and enclosed in a ghetto. These groups were assembled on corners, standing and waiting, under continual guard by soldiers. All contact with them was forbidden.

My mother, however, taught us how to help. At the utmost risk to us and to our family, she sent my younger brother and me with food, teaching us when and how

Congratulations to Katie Kelso & John Yevtich on their May 1, 2014 marriage at Sheep Ranch Catholic Worker farm.

The Empty Bowl Benefit raised almost \$27,000 for our work feeding the poor.

SOUP LINE CLOSED: July 30 - August 9, 2014

PLEASE JOIN US:

Wednesday-Saturday, 6:00 a.m.: Morning prayer at Catholic Worker.

Wednesday-Saturday, 6:30 a.m.: Breakfast served to 150-200 poor & homeless people.

Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.: Hospitality Day, we invite 20 homeless men home for showers, to wash clothes, and for a great lunch.

Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.: Vigil for Peace in front of Federal Courthouse, 333 Las Vegas Blvd. S.

Thursday, 10:30 a.m.: 50 lunches taken to the homeless.

Third Saturday of the month: Deliver food boxes to homes in need.

to drop it inconspicuously, approaching the people and letting it fall where they could reach it. We two became skillful at these forays and everything which my mother, at great pains, obtained for us, was divided and delivered in this surreptitious way to the Jewish groups. We small children were clever enough never to get caught. This continued for a long period of time.

In Vilno also, a group of Franciscan Sisters were hiding Jews to save them from deportation. My mother sacrificed everything to obtain food to take to them as well.

My mother found another way to save Jewish children from deportation and certain death. Valuable goods (and even these became continually scarcer) could be exchanged for baptismal certificates in families where some member had died. In collaboration with two Catholic priests, whom I remember only as Ks. Jan and Ks. Josef, my mother carried out a program of rescue for Jewish children. The priests managed to arrange the certificates while my mother went personally to pick up the children. All had to be done with the utmost secrecy; it was a clandestine operation requiring great courage. Several times my mother took me when she went to pick up the children, whom we then took to a safe place, generally either to a convent of Sisters or to homes in outlying villages. The risk factor here was very high for all concerned.

The tragedy of my mother's early death and the great sorrow of the years that followed it have always been illumined for me by the memory of her self-sacrificing love and the all-important legacy she left—the realization that all of us in the human family are one.