HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART
by Julia Occhiogrosso

Once again we are reading about the drama surrounding the homeless. The city representatives, social service agencies, homeless advocates and even land owners are all part of the discourse. All enter the debate, and for the most part, lock into their predictable positions.

The volunteers at the Catholic Worker have been providing a hot meal daily for the hungry and homeless in Las Vegas for the last twenty years. We have seen this drama played out year after year. As far back as 1987 a few of us were arrested for sitting in front of bulldozers that were clearing out an encampment by the old Salvation Army location. And while more services for the homeless have emerged since then, we are still having this conversation as if it were a new topic.

The conversations about the "homeless problem" take place in cities all over the United States. Different cities have faced the challenge with different degrees of success. But for the most part, across the country, there is a typical pattern found in responding to the homeless. It is to do as little as possible in the hopes that those who are here will go away and others will not come. And while without a doubt, there are many efforts to aid the homeless it has not been enough. All too often it is the ones who are the most broken, the most in need who are the most despised and the most marginalized.

This approach is not working. Perhaps it is time to question the legitimacy of this logic. Human suffering does not disappear when it is ignored. Social wounds will not magically heal without proper attention.

In Las Vegas we are capable of bringing together creative talents who can think outside the box about many projects. Why can we not apply the same genius to the "homeless problem," and have a different story to share next winter?

I believe it is possible. I believe that we have the expertise and talent to significantly better the lives of many of the poor and homeless in this city. We are not for want in this area. But, we must first cultivate an understanding that yields a deep compassion to guide the logic in our community response to their plight. We must mobilize a consensus of the heart that recognizes who the homeless are and where they have come from.

This is no easy task. It does not call for a sentimental view which is not willing to take in the shadows, the weaknesses and bad choices that are part of all human experience. But it does call for us to suspend judgment long enough to imagine what might have been. It challenges us to give mercy to the veteran who has come back from war too shattered to pick up the pieces. Or to accept the fragile soul who cannot stop the voices from pounding in his head. Are we willing to look beyond the anger and rage to see the hurt and frightened child turned man who has been running from abuse and neglect his entire life. Can we respect the day laborer who tries to make what he can of the American Dream by standing on a sidewalk curb day after day begging for employment? Can we forgive the addict for his weaknesses? Would we be willing to at least attempt to understand why a person would perpetuate a cycle of self destruction? Or, is it too difficult for us to look upon the suffering? Is it easier if the

Round Table Discussions

Come join us for Round Table Discussions the second Saturday of each month at the Catholic Worker House. From 8-8:30 a.m. refreshments will be served, from 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. will be the presentation. For info call 647-0728.

Saturday, April 9: Rick Kelley, Contemplative Meditation.
Saturday, May 14: Peter Edger, "God in Politics by Jim Wallace".
Saturday, June 11: Gary Caverlier, Money, Security & Community.

FROM LEFT: EUGENE, JULIA, RYAN AND GARY WITH NEW SOLAR PANELS AT BARTLETT AVE. BUILDING.

problem is kept hidden or bulldozed away? Do we see too much of our own wounds underneath the soiled clothes and weathered faces?

It is only by bringing to the conversation this level of inquiry and empathy that we will be able to provide full and more humane possibilities for the most vulnerable in our community. If we, with receptivity and honesty embrace these questions then the voices of conscience will be heard over the din of complaints. Creativity, shared resources and ingenuity will rise to the occasion. Then, Las Vegas will be upheld as a model city in its unique way of caring for the poor.
How do we raise a family with no paycheck?
by Gary Cavalier

People sometimes ask Julia and me how we get by with no salary.

Each of the four of us in the Las Vegas Catholic Worker community (Ryan, Eugene, Julia and I) receive our housing for free and the use of donated food. Our (Julia and I) home costs total $586 per month (maintenance, insurance, taxes, utilities, etc.), so Julia and I each earn the equivalent of $293 each month from the Catholic Worker.

Eugene and Ryan currently have part-time jobs to earn money for their personal needs. How do Julia and I pay for our other expenses such as our personal car, health care and other needs of our two kids and ourselves? I do some bookkeeping for Pace e Bene which earns $50 per month and we receive a low-income adoption subsidy from the state which totals $705 per month until the kids are 18, as long as our income remains low. This subsidy is the blessing that allows us to not have to get part-time work. The state of Nevada gives the subsidy so parents with low-income will not be prevented from adopting children because they can’t afford to. These two incomes take care of our family needs adequately. We don’t suffer living on a low wage, but most poor do. They get messages all the time that they are “less than”, if they have less. True poverty is when we are enslaved by our need for more. When we realize we have enough, that is radical.

Dorothea Granada, nurse & director of the Ortiz clinic in Nicaragua will visit Las Vegas on a 14 city fundraising tour.

Authentic Nicaraguan Lunch
Christ Church Episcopal
2000 Maryland Parkway
Sat., Apr. 9, 12:30 p.m., donation

PRAY FOR PEACE IN OUR WORLD!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Empty Bowl Benefit Luncheon & Auction
Sat., April 2
11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Green Valley High School
info: 847-0728 or lv cw

L. V. Catholic Worker Website:
www.lvcw.org

National: www.catholicworker.org

Annual Financial Report for 2004

INCOME (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2004)
Empty Bowl event 10,177
from IHN for utilities 4,800
Large Donations, $500+ 24,681
Catholic parishes 15,274
Other Income 785
Monthly Donations 3,895
Christmas Appeal 14,082
Other Donations 6,866
TOTAL INCOME 80,760

EXPENSES (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2004)
Soupline* 23,043
Food Box deliveries** 149
Help T. Others 4,611
500 Van Buren* 10,205
500 "(new bathroom)" 3,075
502 Van Buren* 6,347
Finish 502 Van Buren 7,315
Gary/Julia family home* 7,034
Bartlett & Wilson 278
Solar Panels, Bartlett 7,463
Hospitality Guest 2,220
Vehicle 3,125
Newsletter 951
Retreat costs 1,447
Other costs 1,993
Supplies & Postage 2,895
Volunteer events, etc. 1,691
Salaries 0
TOTAL EXPENSES 83,842
TOTAL INCOME - EXPENSES -3,082

*maintainence, utilities, insurance, taxes
**tens of food is also donated, this only shows cash transactions, we receive food, etc. from churches and individuals
For a detailed financial report or info contact the Las Vegas Catholic Worker.

Stations of the Cross
Good Friday
March 25, noon
At the gates of the Nevada Test Site, Mercury Exit, US 95

(printing donated by AccuPRINT)

PLEASE JOIN US:
Wednesday-Saturday, 6:30 a.m.: Deliver food to homes in need, gather for reflection & prayer, call for info.
Wednesday: 8 a.m. - noon: Hospitality Day, we invite 7 homeless folk for showers, to wash clothes, & lunch.
Thursday: 8 a.m. - 9 a.m.: Vigil for Peace in front of Federal Courthouse, 333 S. Las Vegas Blvd.
Second Sat. of month 8:30 a.m.: Round Table Discussions.