

MANNA *in the wilderness*

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The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

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Compassionate Hearts, Mystical Body

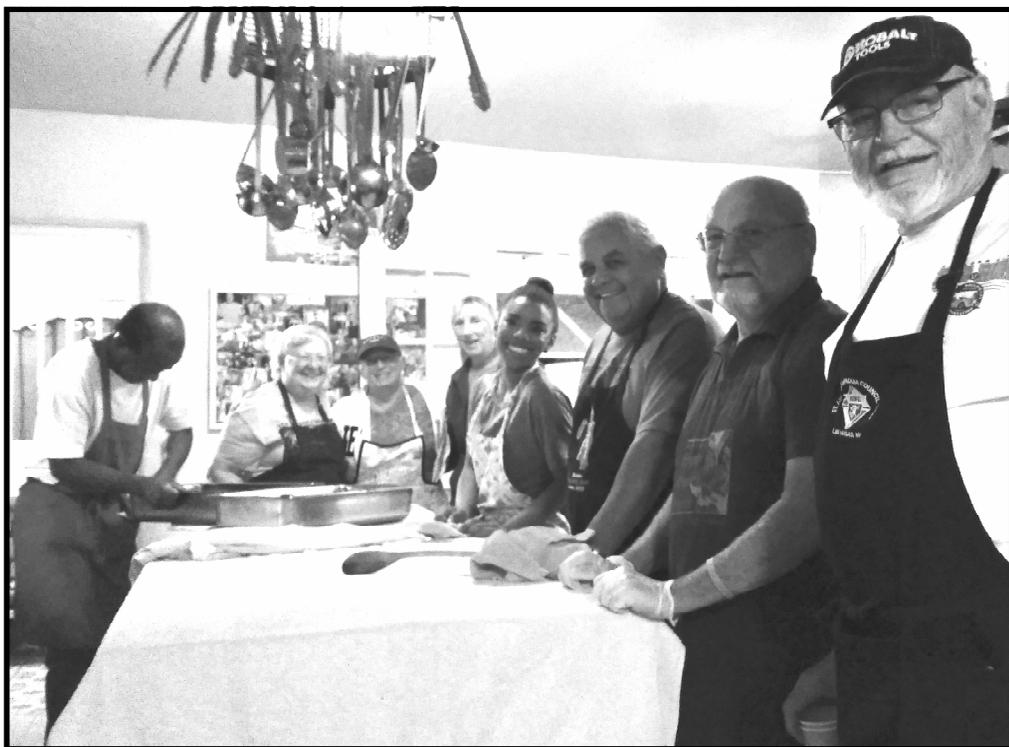
by Julia Occhiogrosso

Six pots boil away on the stove; it's my morning to cook! A new Fettuccine Alfredo recipe demands more of my focus. Still, I'm aware of the volunteer arrivals. Conversations and greetings spill in and I recognize familiar voices and notice newcomers.

Miraculously, without much coordination on most mornings, enough volunteers arrive before dawn to participate in our mission of providing a hot meal for a few hundred homeless men, women and sometimes children.

Our volunteers trek from all parts of the city. Many are Catholic, some are from other faith traditions and some not claiming any religious affiliation at all. They are all ages: parents with young children, retirees, college students and teenage youth groups. They come from varied life experiences: teachers, doctors, social workers, artists, peace activists and seekers.

Looking about the circle, gathered hand-in-hand in prayer before venturing out to serve the morning feast, I am often struck



Drying dishes for the soup line: From left: Henry Freeman, Evelyn Nicholson, Loretta Niedzwiecki, Kim Clark, Brionnie Andrews, Paulino Espinoza, Mark Haynes, Ray McCollum

compassionate hearts. A mystical body that not only coexists but coalesces to manifest and mirror the divine light present in all life.

The miracle of what happens at the

we stay committed to the vision of Gospel love and nonviolence. We aim to provide a place for the many members of this broken body to find hope and healing in working



Mixing Macaroni Salad for the soup line: From left: Paulino Espinoza, Robert Majors, Eugene Sipat, Edna Bernardo, Mark Kelso, Olive O'Donnell, Andrew Sipat

by the spectrum of diversity. People who are unlikely to cross paths and converse are in this moment standing side-by-side, ready to transcend any illusion of our separateness for the greater purpose at hand.

A mystical body is being formed as we are willing to move together into the zone of the suffering reality with vulnerable,

Catholic Worker maybe that the multitudes are fed.

And with your help we have done this consistently for over thirty-two years. Yet I offer that in this historic moment another dimension of the Catholic Worker way becomes especially relevant. In a time where many are defaulting to a stance of hatred, intolerance, fear and divisiveness,

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A mystical body is being formed as we are willing to move together into the zone of the suffering reality with vulnerable, compassionate hearts.

together for the well being of the lost and forgotten. We need your financial kindness to continue our ministry here on the streets of Las Vegas.

Las Vegas Catholic Worker
500 W. Van Buren Ave.
Las Vegas, NV 89106-3039

PayPal will pay 101% of donations made to the Las Vegas Catholic Worker in December. See our website: www.lvcw.org

Role Playing

by Robert Majors

We play this way from young to old
 We act the part and play the role
 Children act like mom and dad
 Yelling orders, make demands
 Dress in clothes too oversized
 To feel the essence of their lives
 When Christmas comes the roles are merry
 Santa Clause and happy caring
 A role we've learned from stories told
 By those we love of roles they know
 To give a gift and keep on sharing
 showing mercy keep on caring
 Even trees have made disguise
 Of light and everlasting life
 But looking deep at roles we hold
 Those who witness what we show
 Play the role oldest of all
 The first with words, the first who saw
 And gave a role of joyous grace
 A warming heart and smiling face
 Thankful that it's all a part
 The silent night, Black Friday carts
 Jolly songs and happy strangers
 Grinch the scrooge and red-nosed reindeers
 Sometimes it is not so clear
 But all these roles are always here
 They play themselves throughout the year
 But change the way that they appear
 for each has brought a way of life
 For good or bad they each provide
 the actors, costumes, plays and plots
 Will all become our story taught

Katie and John in New Orleans



Wedding Day: John Yevtich and Katie Kelso were married on May 1, 2014 at the Earth Abides Catholic Worker Farm in the Sierra foothills of California. **From left:** Margaret Kelso holding Betti Kelso (Katie's sister and niece), Margaret Radcliffe (Katie's mom), John Yevtich, Katie Kelso, Mark Kelso (Katie's Dad), Ian Kelso (Katie's brother)

Hello everyone, Katie and John here. Some may remember us from our three years at the Las Vegas Catholic Worker. We have been at the St. Thomas House of Hospitality of the New Orleans Catholic Worker for over two years now.

This 110+ year-old house provides much succor and entertainment. Succor, from providing hospitality to intact houseless families. Entertainment, from the endless repairs like bedroom ceilings collapsing with accompanying waterfalls of rain. Last week we captured a 5-inch spider from the kitchen. As John answered the door, screams

of "Kill It, Kill It!" greeted a mother on her move-in day.

We host two families in the large upstairs bedrooms. When we're not washing dishes, preparing meals or scrubbing toilets we can be found at various social justice activities around the city.

While addressing our white privilege we join Black-led efforts to dismantle racism in our city and beyond. We are still celebrating the removal of four Confederate statues. Racism is deeply rooted here and its effects are shown clearly through mass incarceration, police abuse, poverty, poor neighborhoods, flooding and inadequate access to good education.

Spiritual and meditative time is precious and we are ever grateful to have access to our parish's chapel for group prayer.

While the Catholic Worker house is running relatively smoothly we have much work to do in our city. We ask always for prayers and actions toward an end to racism in our communities and in our hearts.

We miss our Vegas family and community and send our blessings.

Christmas Breakfast: Sat., Dec. 23, 6:30 a.m.
We will be Closed: Wed., Dec. 27 - Sat. Dec. 30, 2017
Empty Bowl Benefit: April 14, 2018

The Scandal of the Works of Mercy

by Dorothy Day

The Corporal Works of Mercy are to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to ransom the captive, to harbor the harborless, to visit the sick, and to bury the dead.

When Peter Maurin talked about the necessity of practicing the Works of Mercy, he meant all of them. He envisioned Houses of Hospitality in poor parishes in every city of the country, where these precepts of Our Lord could be put into effect. He pointed out that we have turned to state responsibility through home relief, social legislation, and social security, that we no longer practice personal responsibility, but are repeating the words of the first murderer, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Works of Mercy are a wonderful stimulus to our growth in faith as well as love. Our faith is taxed to the utmost and so grows through this strain put upon it. It is pruned again and again, and springs up bearing much fruit. For anyone starting to live literally the words of the Fathers of the Church—"What is superfluous for one's need is to be regarded as plunder if one re-

tains it for one's self"—there is always a trial ahead. "Our faith, more precious than gold, must be tried as though by fire."

Here is a letter we received today: "I took a gentleman seemingly in need of spiritual and temporal guidance into my home on a Sunday afternoon. Let him have a nap on my bed, went through the want ads with him, made coffee and sandwiches for him, and when he left, I found my wallet had gone also."

I can only say that the saints would only bow their heads and not try to understand or judge. They received no thanks—well, then, God had to repay them. This is expecting heroic charity, of course. But these things happen for our discouragement, for our testing. We are sowing the seed of love, and we are not living in the harvest time. We must love to the point of folly, and we are indeed fools, as Our Lord Himself was who died for such a one as this. It is agony to go through such bitter experiences, because we all want to love, we desire with a great longing to love our fellows, and our hearts are often crushed at such rejections. But, as a Carmelite nun said to me last week,

"It is the crushed heart which is the soft heart, the tender heart."

Dorothy Day co-founded the Catholic Worker movement with Peter Maurin in New York in 1933. This selection is edited from an article written in Nov. 1949.

- 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.
Second Saturday of the month: Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast to the homeless.
Third Saturday of the month: Deliver food boxes to homes in need.

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