Compassionate Hearts, Mystical Body

by Julia Occhiogrosso

Six pots boil away on the stove; it’s my morning to cook! A new Fettucine 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 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, 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 Catholic Worker may be 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, 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 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.

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

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

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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
Play this way from young to old
We play this way from young to old
by Robert Majors

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 ceiling 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