



Schedule of Events:

Please consider joining us for the following

Weekly– Shared Prayer, Tues. and Thurs. at 5:30 pm, 3722 Baudin St. (Come Feb @ 1910 Constance St.)

Weekly– Day Labor Breakfast, Wed. at 7:30 am, 4738 Palmyra St.

January:

8, Community Meal at 6:30 pm, 3722 Baudin St.

12, Bible Study: Enacting the Kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel at 7:00-8:30pm, 3722 Baudin St.

15, Clarification of Thought (Topic to be announced) at 6:30pm, 4738 Palmyra St.

16, Work Day, 1910 Constance St.

23, Work Day, 1910 Constance St.

26, Bible Study: Enacting the Kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel at 7:00-8:30pm, 3722 Baudin St.

30, Move-In Day, 1910 Constance St.

February:

5, Community Meal at 6:30 pm, 1910 Constance St.

9, Bible Study: Enacting the Kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel at 7:00-8:30pm, 1910 Constance St.

17, Ash Wednesday Public Repentance Action, TBA

19, Clarification of Thought (Presentation by Tom Ryan, of Loyola Institute for Ministry) at 6:30pm, 1910 Constance St.

23, Bible Study: Enacting the Kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel at 7:00-8:30pm, 1910 Constance St.

Needs and Luxuries

As we move into our new house we will be working to furnish the place. Please think of us if you or your neighbors are purging your household or any items on our list or other useful stuff.

House Furnishings: Couches, Tables, Bookcases, Lamps, Dining Table, Chairs, etc.

Bedroom Stuff: Bed Frames, Twin Mattresses/Box Springs, Toddler Bed, Dressers, Sheets, Blankets, Pillows, Towels, etc.

Kitchenware: Plates, Bowls, Silverware, Pots, Pans, Coffee Percolator, etc.

Also: Washer, Dryer, Board Games, Socks, Food, Money...

Eating Dinner Around a Table

By Jan Mustafa

On the first cold night of 2009, I went to my friend Dan's house for dinner with his community. Their house is interesting because they live in a cool old house in Mid-City and they have no TV, Internet or even much of a music collection. Yet their home is comfortable and relaxing, truly an escape from the modern world. The art of conversation, and the sense of community are alive and well at this house in a world where people exist absorbed in their electronic devices and rarely see their own housemates, much less their own neighbors.

We were engaged in such when Gary knocked on the door. Gary, a weathered fifty-something sporting a ball cap and plaid coat, lives in the apartment downstairs, which doesn't appear to be in what most of us consider to be livable conditions. We began to prepare the dinner, Dan and I, while Gary sat with us in the kitchen, filling a Tupperware bowl he'd brought with him with ice to take home with him.



Art by Meinrad Craighead

come many friends and anyone else who may be hungry to join them for dinner. Before long, Roy offered to help peel the shrimp. Based on his inability to learn a handshake I'd tried to teach him earlier I realized his hands must be stiff and arthritic. It seemed to make him happy to have a task in this meal. He wasn't meticulous in saving the tail meat, but his warm fingers thawed the frozen bodies

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Community Update

By Katy Heeren-Mueller

"Knock, Knock" are the sounds and words that you might hear while sitting at the Catholic Worker Table eating a meal. A friendly "Come in!" usually follows. One night at dinner, before anyone else had a chance to respond, little Cylis called out, "Come in" and we all just smiled and laughed. Dinner has come to be a sacred time at the Catholic Worker House. You never know what you are going to eat, with whom you will be eating, or what might be discussed. But rest assured, you will leave with a full belly and full of new thoughts to chew on for the rest of the evening!

It has been a good three months in the Catholic Worker Community as we continue to grow and understand our unfolding identity as a community. We finished October out with our fall garage sale. We had

a very successful event thanks to all the donations of goods, time, and talent. We are grateful to be able to help folks simplify their lives by giving away their unneeded items. We asked for donations of 25¢ to \$5 for nearly everything; and for the last two hours we gave away all that remained. Thanks also to the children who provided delicious and flavorful lemonade. Total we made over \$500.00! We look forward to making this an annual event next year!

We continue to get to know our purpose through the rhythm as a Catholic Worker House. These past few months we have hosted two Clarification of Thought evenings, one on Health Care in New Orleans specifically at the St. Thomas Clinic and the other on the Parable of the Talents. We have held three Community Friday Night Dinners with our neighbors. The annual SOA cross making and decorating was a beautiful prayerful evening that took place two Fridays before the SOA protest. We have started our biweekly bible study on the Gospel of Luke and

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Image by Banksy

NEW ORLEANS CATHOLIC WORKER

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Support Community:
Katy and Joe Heeren-Mueller
Dan Thelen
Paul and Sue Troyano

WE'RE MOVING!!!

**As of Feb. 1 our Address will be
1910 Constance St.,
New Orleans, LA 70130**

Poetic Joy of the Incarnation

By Dan Thelen

When you get a chance, take a moment to read the first 2 chapters of the gospel of Luke. Reading these words surrounding the birth of Jesus is definitely good medicine for the soul. It is full of people of good faith like Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zechariah, Simeon and Anna, people that God chooses to bless in a very special way and make their greatest dreams come true. There are shepherds and angels coming to honor Jesus Christ, Savior of the World. The story is rich with such joy and wonder that Mary and Zechariah and Simeon and even the heavenly hosts cannot contain their beautiful songs of poetic praise that accent these chapters.

Mary: "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked with favor on his lowly servant."

Zechariah: "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has come to his people and set them free."

Simeon: "My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people."

Luke seems overwhelmed by the joy of this occasion – which although it occurs in the midst of Roman imperial oppression is not marred by the violence which Matthew's gospel recollects. Yes, Zechariah is "startled and gripped with fear," Mary is "greatly troubled" and the shepherds are "terrified." But they come to have faith and so get to be a part of the wonderful celebration that takes place (even if it meant shutting Zechariah up for awhile. "Just trust me," is the gist of what the angel Gabriel is trying to say).

This is indeed a blessed season. Now is an opportunity to put aside whatever it is that may be troubling you or weighing on you, and let yourself feel the irrepressible joy of Christmas. Find some sacred space, open the gospel of Luke, and share with our ancestors this great and holy celebration. Invite everyone you can to partake in the feast of joy that God has prepared for all Her children. Know that however small or fearful you may think you are, you are an instrument of God's grace in the world. Believe again in your dreams and enable the dreams of another to come true. And, most of all, spread the word that our wildest dream has come true—the liberating good news that the divine and human are one.

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." I pray for a blessed, safe and love-filled Christmas to you all. From all of us at the New Orleans Catholic Worker, many thanks for the precious gift you are to us and to the world. Ω



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quickly so I could throw them right into the hot olive oil and spices.

It had been a long time since I had actually sat down at a table to eat in anyone's home, mine included. Like many Americans, I was used to eating on the couch, in bed, in the car, or standing up. There is a sense of warmth and comfort here - place mats and a scented candle seem to belong in houses of my parents generation!

Eventually Gary and Roy drifted back out into the night, and I asked Dan if Roy was homeless. Evidently, Roy lived in an abandoned house in the area. I remembered how he had told me on Easter Sunday that the empty lot across the way had held a shop where he once worked. In a city ravaged by time and water, even natives in their early fifties seem to me like relics, living history. He had told me that he had once worked on a shrimp boat. I observed how more Christian households should be like that of Dan and his friends. Dan told me that it's just a matter of listening to Jesus. Many Christians seem to have missed some of Jesus' most clear and important messages: Feed the Hungry. Clothe the Poor. Love your neighbor. What's so hard about that, anyway? Ω

Mrs. Mustafa is a neighbor of the N.O. Catholic Worker

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have about 10 people in attendance. We remain a continued presence at the Home Depot on Carrollton Ave at 8:00 on Wednesday morning feeding the workers sandwiches and soup.

We still support a more just health care system—including the reopening of Charity Hospital. Several of us have been involved in a local coalition called *Health Care for All! New Orleans*, which held an action at the Federal Building on December 16th. We have also organized a pre-Christmas protest of The Body Shop, which despite its eco-friendly image has supported its major palm oil provider, *Daabon*, which is responsible for displacing 123 families from their land in central Colombia. Representatives of these families and international groups including the Christian Peacemaker Teams have called for a boycott of The Body Shop until the land is returned.

A final Catholic Worker Community update comes from the blessing of a new house to continue to grow and expand our vision of a Catholic Worker House of Hospitality! With the support of Hope House, a community center in the Irish Channel, as of January we will begin to lease one of their neighborhood houses on Constance Street between St. Andrew and St. Mary streets. In the coming weeks, we will be hosting a few work parties for folks to come volunteer their time on basic construction and painting so the house is ready for us to move in by February 1st. As we are extremely excited and grateful to have this opportunity for a large house, we continue to need your prayers and support more than ever to help our community grow. Ω