



Schedule of Events:

Please consider joining us for the following

Daily— Dinner is served most days around 6pm @ St. Thomas House, 1910 Constance St.

Weekly—

Day Labor Breakfast, Wed., 8am, @ N. Carrollton Ave. Home Depot

Prayer, Tuesday and Friday 8:30am @ St. Thomas House and Monday 11:30am @ Rebuild Center

Community Resource Center, Thursday 6-8pm @ Hope House

January:

25, Bible Study: God's Kin-dom in Acts and At Hand from 7:00pm

February:

14, Valentine's Day Anti-Consumerism Action, (details tbd)

15, Bible Study: God's Kin-dom in Acts and At Hand from 7:00pm

18, Clarification of Thought (Jordan Flaherty of Louisiana Justice Institute) at 6:30pm

March:

1, Bible Study: God's Kin-dom in Acts and At Hand from 7:00pm

9, Ash Wednesday, Repent of War and Empire Action, (details tbd)

15, Bible Study: God's Kin-dom in Acts and At Hand from 7:00pm

18, Clarification of Thought (Restaurant Justice) at 6:30pm

29, Bible Study: God's Kin-dom in Acts and At Hand from 7:00pm



Our needs include

Financial support, blankets, glasses and bowls, twin size mattress/box spring, working computer or tech support, peanut butter, produce, toilet paper, clock, and dressers. Thank you!

Our deepest thanks

Go out to those who have financially supported us over holidays. Thanks for investing in community.

Other Groups Organizing that we want to see grow include:

Food Not Bombs, is continuing to get organized. They meet on certain Sundays. Contact nolafoodnotbombs@gmail.com

Uptown Anarchists, have begun meeting every other Tuesday at 7pm at Hey! Café on Magazine near Napoleon. They next meet on January 25.

Around the House

by Joe Heeren-Mueller

I can no longer think about the American celebration of Christmas without thinking of Richard Horsley's deconstruction of this festival of consumerism, which inevitably reinforces the dominant social structures (see his book *Christmas Unwrapped: Consumerism, Christ, and Culture*). Yet as the gospel writer, Luke, would have it, the nativity story subverts the imperial paradigm by using the language of empire to inaugurate a very different reign. The "kingdom" of Jesus is one in which God holds authority over and against human power structures. Economic and social hierarchies are overturned. Fidelity to Caesar is replaced by faith in God's life-giving spirit alive in Jesus and nature.

That spirit has certainly been active in our lives of late. The last two months have been a bustle of activity here. Everyone pitched in to make a deliciously memorable Thanksgiving dinner, which was followed the next day by quixotic witness against consumerism outside the Canal Place Mall.

As our anticipation of the end of Katy's pregnancy mounted, we welcomed Jess and Howard into the house. Jess's generous heart and buoyant spirit have filled and lifted us up as she has busied herself inside and outside the house. Howard has blessed us with tasty venison stew from a deer killed by Dan's mom, Sharon Thelen. It's a good feeling to get closer to the food I'm eating and it's challenging me to think about practical nonviolence when it comes to what I'm consuming at the table.

Our anticipation came to an end on December 22 when Katy's labor began. It ended after 22 hours when Micah Francis was born a few strokes before midnight. Praise God who brings such goodness! Enjoying his presence, watching him grow, and navigating the challenges of nurturing a newborn have filled Katy and my days since. Cylis is growing into his role as a big brother and it's safe to say everyone in the house has experienced some

of the warm, fuzzy feelings that babies bring. That Micah's birth coincided so closely with Christmas has helped me to meditate on gospel versions of the feast and hold in my heart what I have seen.

Micah's very presence was an occasion for exceptionally gracious visits from Katy's mom, Kay and step-dad, Terry as well as from my sister Elisabeth. It has been good to add bonding time with extended family to what we are already doing together. We did a lot of playing games, singing songs, and telling stories to place ourselves in time



Micah Francis Heeren-Mueller posing with his proud parents.

together and remind each other of where we have been.

Stephanie returned from a visit with her family only to introduce more life into the house. She became a mother to, as she calls them, a thousand squirming babies when she added a great bin of worms to the kitchen to help us compost our waste.

So far they've been nibbling

away at everything we give them. Thanks wormies. Derek and Donnell have also visited family recently – Derek to his brother's in Mississippi and Donnell to see his children in Houston. Both returned full of good energy from the experience. Dan did a fabulous job hosting a large Christmas dinner with help from "Grandma" Lowrine. Bravo!

December also saw a splendid Advent prayer and Christmas party at the house as well as a witness against militarism outside the WWII museum on the feast of the holy innocents. The domination system was exposed by the violent reaction of certain museum security staff to our presence. We organized another action on January 11 to commemorate the ninth year of detention for detainees at Guantanamo Bay and to call for an end to torture at all US prisons especially in Cuba, at Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan and at super-max prisons like the Florence, Colorado prison which has been condemned for its human rights abuses.

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Going On a New Journey

by Stephanie Malinowski

As a recent college graduate, I am often asked why I chose to live at a Catholic Worker House, rather than pursue more common options. I say that the Catholic Worker beckoned me toward a different and more desired way of life, a way that values interdependence over independence and people over profit. A way grounded in the belief that we must reshape how we live so that others may live. After studying so many theories on how to do this, I knew that there was no better way to test them than to actually live them. So last September, I packed up from Seattle and moved out here to begin my post-college venture.

In my last few months, I've found it can be easy to forget that this type of lifestyle is far from normal. To me, it just makes sense. Why allow someone to sleep on the street at night, when



Gary and Katy on the Catholic Worker porch

we've extra space in our house. Why not leave our door open at dinner time, when there are still seats at the table for those who hunger. We participate together in acts of resistance against oppressive systems because

they cause suffering to our neighbors at home and around the world, and complicity erodes our humanity. These works are the reason I am a Catholic Worker.

I am aware though that it's an unusual life. Every now and then I'm conscious of how my atypical path has put me at odds with society's mainstream image of success, and I get discouraged. I feel expected to compete for power, produce more,

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NEW ORLEANS CATHOLIC WORKER

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<i>We call barbarians people living on the other side of the border. We call civilized people living on this side of the border.... ...we do not hesitate to kill them before we have tried to civilize them.</i>	<i>So we exterminate barbarians without civilizing them. And we persist in calling ourselves civilized.</i>
	- From "Barbarians and Civilized" by Peter Maurin.

Homelessness: Don't Blame the Victims

By Mike Howells

The media coverage of the fire in the Ninth Ward that claimed eight lives on December 28th, based on what I have viewed, studiously avoids drawing any links between the tragedy and the appalling shortage of affordable housing in the city. Channel 6 News pins the root cause of the tragedy on the decision by the victims to opt for lodging in an abandon building rather than at one of the city's officially recognized homeless shelters. This news report also dwelled on the inherent dangers of trying to warm oneself in an abandoned building by setting a fire. A news brief on NBC national news linked the tragedy to the victims' penchant for living an alternative life style.

These news reports made no mention that the fire tragedy in the Ninth Ward occurred in the city that suffers from a rate homelessness higher than that of any other major city in the country. These reports made no reference to the pitifully few number of emergency beds available at the city's pitifully few emergency housing shelters. And, of course, the corporate news did not raise the fact that Washington and City Hall have been waging an all out war on low-income affordable rental housing in

The Everyday Catholic Worker

by Dan Thelen

While first educating myself about the Catholic Worker movement, I quickly came to associate it with large houses of hospitality, Ploughshares actions with lengthy prison sentences, and other aspects that are indeed incredible witnesses to the world in the way of peace and justice. With time and



experience, I've come to appreciate the small and simple acts that makes one a Catholic Worker as well. Before we opened the St. Thomas house, my first year and a half as a Catholic Worker consisted of building community, sharing life together in simplicity and acting in small ways to give whatever we could to our neighbors and friends in need. I realize now that our efforts echo the aspirations of early Christians, who "devoted themselves to...the

post-Katrina New Orleans. As far as the corporate news is concerned the blame for this tragedy rests squarely on the victims. As usual the monsters in charge are left off the hook. Ω

Mike Howells organizes with C3/Hands Off Iberville.

A Great Step Forward for the People of Las Pavas:

The Body Shop terminates its trading relationship with Daabon

From www.cpt.org

It has been nearly a year since the campaign began to pressure The Body Shop to publicly end its business relationship with palm oil manufacturer Daabon. Today The Body Shop announced on its website, "...since a systemic and long-lasting solution is no nearer to being reached despite our engagement, The Body Shop has formally terminated its trading relationship with Daabon." The ultimate goal of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) campaign is that Daabon return the land to the evicted families and pay reparations.

"This is a great step forward because it will send a clear message to companies who commit abuses that they will lose business. The struggle continues because the families still remain off of their land," stated Banesa Estrada, lawyer for the

breaking of bread and to prayer. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need." (Acts 2:42-44)

I have come to realize that the calling of the Catholic Worker is in many ways a modern revival of what Jesus has called us to from the beginning. The call of the Catholic Worker can be the call of every Christian. What can I give from where I am? What does hospitality to those in need look like from my position in life? How can I begin to resist oppression, practice works of mercy, and enjoy the gifts of community, simplicity and spirituality in small ways here and now?

Many thanks to all of you who are living inspirations of the call of Jesus in ways both big and small. To be an everyday Catholic Worker means seeing the need of our world and believing every day that there is at least something you can do to help to "make the world an easier place for people to be good." Ω

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As Mardi Gras and Lent approach, we look forward to spring weather gardening after a muddled attempt to construct a greenhouse in December. We hope that the spirit which has already brought us so much life will continue to invigorate and transform us. Ω

Las Pavas community. "This is a step that shows what we have said is true and a move towards justice," said a leader of the Las Pavas community.

There is still a lot to accomplish in this campaign. CPT Colombia will be meeting with the community and its allies to discuss further strategies, so be ready for further calls to action. The struggle for the families of Las Pavas ends when they return to their land and Daabon makes reparations for the damages caused.

The people of Las Pavas are a sustainable farming community, growing food to feed their families. Paramilitary violence forced the families to leave the land several times but each time they returned. In 2006 the community was in the process of claiming its land rights under Colombian law when a Daabon consortium bought the land from absentee owner, who had lost his rights to the land for years of abandonment. On July 14, 2009, through corrupt means, the Colombian riot police forcefully removed the community of Las Pavas.

It has been 2.5 years since the illegal eviction of the 123 families (more than 500 people) from the Las Pavas farm. Throughout this year, the community has been living in a humanitarian crisis with no food security and no land. Ω

Catholic Worker Joe Heeren-Mueller is a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams since 2007.

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and take up more space on this earth than I need, when what I truly desire is simplicity through sharing with others. At times I wonder if I should be doing things differently.

But then I remember the call that brought me to this community, to do this work, and I am reenergized. I recall those who have lived before me and tried to follow a similar path, women such as Mother Teresa,



Sue and Paul Troyano

who said, "We are not called to be successful, but to be faithful." Her words resonate with me; for it was certainly faith, rather than a promise of success, that drew me to choose the uncertain life of a Catholic Worker. Dorothy Day herself wasn't certain of the future of the Catholic Worker Movement, but she focused more of her energy on the day-to-day, committing her love to the community, imperfect as it was, and that's how she was faithful.

This is the type of faith that drives me. Ω