



Schedule of Events:

Please consider joining us for the following

Daily— Dinner is served most days around 6pm— feel free to drop in.

Weekly—
Day Labor Breakfast, Wed., 8am.
@ Carrollton Home Depot
Prayer, Friday 8:30am
@ St. Thomas House

September:
17. Clarification of Thought (William Thiele, from the School for Contemplative Living) Gather at 6:30pm, discussion at 7:00pm
28. Potluck Dinner and conversation with Kathy Kelly, from Voices for Creative Nonviolence from 6:30 to 8:30pm

October:
1. Pax Christi Peace Liturgy at 7pm at St. Joseph Church, 1802 Tulane
12. Bible Study: God's Kin-dom in Acts and at Hand, 7:00pm
15. Clarification of Thought (Pam Nath, Orleans Parish Prison Expansion) Gather at 6:30pm, discussion at 7:00pm
23. Garage Sale from 8am to 2pm
26. Bible Study: God's Kin-dom in Acts and at Hand, 7:00pm

November:
9. Bible Study: God's Kin-dom in Acts and at Hand, 7:00pm
12. Cross painting and prayer for SOA Watch Vigil— at 7:00pm
20-21. Shut Down the School of Americas Teach-In and Vigil in Columbus, Georgia
23. Bible Study: God's Kin-dom in Acts and at Hand, 7:00pm
25. Thanksgiving Meal— consider joining us for dinner at 4pm



At Table, by Rose Spring

Garage Sale Fundraiser

We'll try to sell or give away whatever you can clean out from your closets. From now until the sale used items can be dropped off at the house. Modest prices all day and free hot dogs for lunch.

Our needs include

Toilet paper, laundry and dish soap, food stuffs (i.e. coffee, peanut butter, sandwich bread, canned food), dressers, bedside tables, financial support, prayer, weather-stripping (not in that order). Thank you!

Orleans Parish Prison Expansion Threatens City's Poor and Minority Residents

By Joe Heeren-Mueller

While cranes and pile drivers proceed with demolition and preparation for construction of a new facility for Orleans Parish Prison, city residents continue to await recommendations from a City Hall working group. New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu convened an "informal" working group to study the effects of Orleans Parish Sheriff Marlin Gusman's plan for expanding the country's largest per capita detention facility.

The proposed project would expand the prison from a capacity of 3,851 to 5,862 prisoners, enabling the sheriff to hold 1 out of every 60 New Orleans residents in the parish prison at any given time. Los Angeles, the American city with the largest imprisoned population—19,533, has an imprisoned resident ratio of 1 in 504. The city would need to reduce its size to 850 beds in order to be consistent with the national average.

Yet for over a year, Sheriff Gusman has yet to respond to a report from the Department of Justice which found that the conditions at the prison "violate the constitutional rights of inmates." The report, dated September 11, 2009, was based on investigations conducted by officials the previous year. Violations included physical abuse of prisoners by prison staff, lack of proper medical care for inmates, and failure to protect inmates from violence by other inmates.

In the past year, at least seven people have died while in custody at the jail, most recently Tracy Barquet, 25, allegedly as the result of a seizure. Other deaths this year include Micheal Hitzman, David O'Neal, Shedrick Godfrey, Chris Blevins, José Nelson Reyes-Zelaya, and Richard Scarce. Three of the deaths were attributed to heart attacks, two to suicide attempts, and one to an injury sustained in a fight with another inmate.

Former inmates have made allegations of retaliation by prison officials, while others have suggested that the culture of impunity that pervades the New Orleans Police Department, which led to several well publicized cover-ups of police killings in the days surrounding the Hurricane Katrina, extends to the Parish Prison system as well. Stories circulate widely, though remain unverified, of inmate killings by prison officials, who have then passed the deaths off as natural or accidental.

The jail's funding scheme — which links payments from the city, state, and federal governments to

the sheriff based on the number of inmates held for any part of each day — encourages excessive jail time for otherwise minor offenses.

A movement to reform the jail and reduce its size is gaining momentum. Over 300 people contributed \$22.39, the daily cost for one city inmate, to take out a newspaper asking the Mayor and City Council, which controls zoning approval for the project, to build a smaller jail and divert excess funds to other programs that would decrease crime and improve the lives of city residents.

Proponents of the over-sized jail note that by a 3 -1 margin, voters approved an October 2008 bond initiative to raise \$41 million that would be added federal money for a new jail. Opponents, however, assert that the bond issue was added late to the ballot and little public conversation occurred about the proposed use of the money. The jail's proposed size was misrepresented in a Times-Picayune article, which reported on October 5, 2008, that the passage of the bond issue would result in the construction of a 1,500 bed facility — roughly a quarter of the size currently proposed.

The Catholic Worker fully supports halting the current Orleans Parish Prison expansion. Security does not lie in the privation of others' basic rights. Their track record shows that police and prison officials will fill as big a jail as can be built to the detriment of the city's poor and especially its' Black and Latino/a residents. Further radical changes are indispensable as well — including a thorough overhaul of the jail's funding and administration. Ω



The Catholic Worker's St. Thomas House at 1910 Constance St.

Catholic Worker Community Celebrates 2nd Birthday

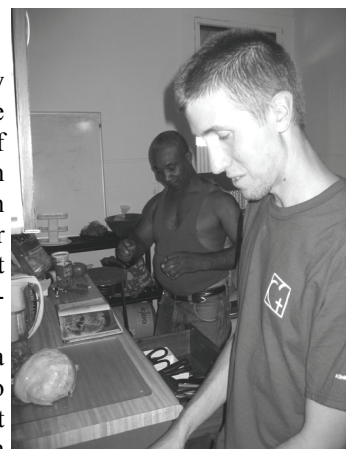
By Katy Heeren-Mueller

The end of the month of August 2010, the St. Thomas Catholic Worker celebrated its 2nd birthday. It was just 2 years ago, right Hurricane Gustav, that the conversation that gave root to this Catholic Worker community began. True to Catholic Worker form, it came about from just sitting around, talking, and putting our ideas into action.

We have come a great distance in these two years. We began by simply meeting for dinner and praying together. Dan Thelen soon joined Joe and me at our apartment in a low-income area of Mid-City. We started hosting our once a month Clarification of Thought meetings. At the same time, we rooted ourselves deeper in the scriptures with a bi-weekly bible study. For over a year we have continued to bring a

small Wednesday morning meal to those who gather outside of Home Depot on Carrollton Avenue in hope of work. A year ago, we published the first edition of Seeds, our bi-monthly newsletter.

We prayed for a larger house in order to offer overnight hospitality. We met with many different



Donnell and Dan prepare dinner .
(COMMUNITY, Continued on page 2)

NEW ORLEANS CATHOLIC WORKER **ST. THOMAS HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY**

1910 Constance St.
New Orleans, LA
70130

Phone: 504-527-5363
Email: cw@nolacatholicworker.org

Thanks to those who helped raise a new garden bed outside our kitchen door.

Let us know if you would like some zesty Basil from *our* garden.

Please consider planting a few onions, a potato plant, some greens or other veggie in *your* fall garden to share with us or someone else in need.

Meditation On The Spiritual Journey

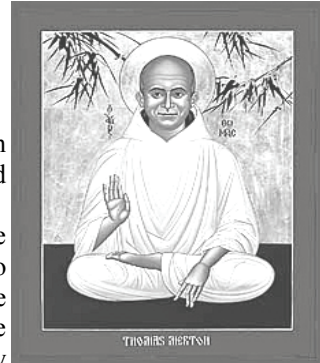
By Dan Thelen

The spiritual journey is the most important aspect of our lives, a deeply personal path of growing into faith such that no two paths look exactly alike. It is written how Jesus himself frequently took time out from his busy ministry to be alone with His beloved Father in Heaven.

I believe that all of us, especially those who labor for justice in the world, must find ways to cultivate the love and heart of Christ through prayer. It is this that most truly infuses our work with meaning. As Corinthians says, "If I do all these things but have not love, I am nothing more than a resounding gong." Jesus said the greatest commandment is to "love your neighbor as you love yourself." This love can be expressed both through prayer and service on behalf of those in need. For those who like myself are familiar with burnout in the work of serving those in need, we need a place to go where we can fill our cup. Thus prayer, in its endlessly diverse forms,

becomes the place where we can go to both empty out our human weakness and be filled with the pure, infinite, healing love of God.

There are many ways to nurture the life of the soul, and I encourage you to consider the things you do that give you life and nourishment. Here are some of the evolving practices that give me life in my spiritual journey. In my room, I have set up an altar of devotional objects in front of my yoga mat and meditation cushion. This is to remind and inspire me each and every morning to begin my day in prayer, meditation and silence. My style of prayer is different every day, depending on how I am feeling. Sometimes I focus on my breathing and find stillness within myself. Other times I just think of all the people in my life who need prayers and send them light. And then other times I just bask in the love of Christ and contemplate His Infinite Love. By being truly centered, I hope to move through the day with a more selfless,



Thomas Merton by Robert Lentz

aware and open heart to the needs of those around me.

Prayer is so very important for me because it keeps my heart filled so as to have more to offer to those around me. I love the phrase "contemplatives in action," which comes from Jerome Nadal, a 16th century Jesuit, because it suggests that our internal and external lives are in a symbiotic relationship. Our service to others nourishes our relationship with God, and spending time with God daily nourishes our service to others. But even prayer can turn dry if we do not take time in our day to open our hearts and reach out to others in need.

Blessings on your spiritual journey and know that wherever you are, God is right there with you. Ω

Housing Authority Seeking to Expand Homelessness

By Sr. Lilianne Flavin, OP, Hope House

Like the residents of the Iberville Housing Development and others interested in housing for low income people, I was not surprised when I read Katy Reckdahl's article in the Sept. 2 edition of *The Times-Picayune* about the plans already underway for Iberville.

Prospective developers have been asked to submit concept plans describing the type of mixed-income, mixed use community that they envision for Iberville. Evidently, the decision has already been made that Iberville will be re-developed as a mixed-income community.

Mr. Gilmore, HANO's chief, states that "Residents of Iberville will not be left out. They will be at the table from the beginning to the end." Were residents asked whether a mixed-income, mixed-use community is the best option for their community? And is this really the best plan in light of the critical need for low-income housing in the city?

In a Nov. 12, 2009 *Times-Picayune* article, also written by Katy Reckdahl, she reported on a study by the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center and the Urban Institute which estimates "that next year the city will have a surplus of at least 6582 market rate apartments, but a need for 13,429 affordable apartments or housing subsidies that would make higher rate apartments affordable." Doesn't this study make a strong case for 819 subsidized apartments rather than a mixed income community as the plan for Iberville envisions?

To the City Council members and others who will make the final decision about Iberville, may I offer this suggestion. Spend a few hours at a social service agency answering the phone and listening to the stories of people who struggle daily with issues of housing. Allow those stories to change you so that you can get beyond commonly held misperceptions and personal bias, and make a decision based on a genuine concern for the welfare of people who struggle daily. Ω

(COMMUNITY, Continued from page 1)



organizations and considered different ways to achieve our hospitality vision. We prayed some more. We listened and waited with expectant hearts. The Spirit provided a partnership with Hope House and brought us our new home on Constance Street. Our roots in prayer seemed to show signs of blossoming. People came together to repair and clean the house before we moved in, which we did the last weekend of January 2010. People brought food, flowers, fellowship, and furniture! At the end of it all, the volunteers at the house were left overjoyed for your support and prayers. Our efforts were recognized and published by the Clarion Herald.

As winter drew to a close, we began offering hospitality. We have hosted over twenty short and longer-term guests in need of housing and community. Many friends, family, volunteers and activists have visited us – creating and sustaining supportive relations with people and groups in New Orleans. We painted the trim on the house bright blue and joined the community garden. We established regular community meals and continue to pray with one another on Friday mornings. Extended community members have given us continued support through generous donations, attending house events, and personal prayer.

Today we are grateful for this two-year journey. We look forward to deepening our vision of the St. Thomas Catholic Worker Community as we enter our third year of growth. May it continue to unfold in the way Dorothy Day described the development of her community in New York; "it all happened while we sat there talking, and it is still going on." Ω