



PENIEL

February 2003

WHERE JACOB WRESTLED WITH GOD AND SURVIVED

Temenos Catholic Worker

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The Conversion of St. Paul.

On this warm, sunny, California day, I sit on the edge of San Francisco Bay meditating on the green hills of Marin and the Golden Gate Bridge. As the waves crash against the shore I think of my own continuing conversion. As a young boy I heard that call so clearly, moving me into the ordained ministry and the institutional church and then, in my own broken-ness, meeting the Crucified Jesus and propelling me into living and ministering with the most broken and rejected of society.

Two nights ago I moved along the street, being greeted by psychotic Luke, by James who was tweeting on speed, and by numerous people sleeping in the doorways. They are broken, smelly, and difficult, but I reflected, they are Jesus. My conversion is ongoing, and it has been in my living with these individuals that I find Jesus daily.

It is to this experience of encountering Jesus - in whatever disguise he takes - that I invite others, so that the barriers might be broken down and we might see each other's common humanity and spiritual uniqueness. This summer, my intern Mannick wrote of his time living and working with the kids of Polk Street. He too experienced conversion; let us hear him:

I'm probably not the image that comes to one's mind when they hear of someone walking the streets of San Francisco at 2 am, trying to befriend the homeless and prostitutes alike. A non-Christian, middle-class Stanford student studying engineering who seems to be wasting time when he could be working a high-powered internship for some Fortune-500 corporation.

"Why was I here, and what good did it do?"

"I knew I could not solve any one individual's crisis, nor was I about to stumble upon a solution to the homeless problem."

— Mannick

From the beginning, I realized that I was not going to make any long-term impact. I was not there to preach safe-sex, to halt drug use, or to help individuals embrace higher moral values. I knew I could not solve any one individual's crisis, nor was I about to stumble upon a solution to the homeless problem.

I thought of my time in San Francisco as an opportunity to stop for a moment, and to take a look at the people around me. Not businessmen, tourists and students, but the guy in front of Walgreen's with a cup outstretched asking for a bit of spare change.

It drives me crazy to see people my own age on the street - the fact that some have been dealt such a different set of circumstances from me, and as a result ended up on the streets contracting AIDS and hepatitis C. I take each day for granted when I

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wake up to my alarm in bed, instead of on the sidewalk being shaken awake at 6 am by a police officer.

Maybe, I just wanted answers. A chance to try and figure out what certain people did so differently, and why, here in this nation, this was happening to them.

What was most disquieting was the lack of hope, and the loneliness I saw in the eyes of the people I met. While working with a medical van, I'd be unable to fill out standard report forms that requested a telephone number (none), an address (none), an emergency contact (none), and health insurance (none). Most had only a friend or two they could count on in the world, and no family to speak of.

People had found themselves not only in dire circumstances, but what was worse, found themselves going through it alone. I guess it should have been no surprise to me when I found that wherever I went, whether it was the county jail, or the AIDS ward at Laguna Honda Hospital, people were anxious to talk to someone, so that they may lay their emotional burdens out in front of them, that they were willing to talk to anyone who took a minute to stop and listen.

A Vietnam veteran spoke of his frustrations with housing, continually signing up on lists that only open once every few years, and then being away when his number came up, only to learn upon coming back that he must now wait a few more years in order to get back on that list.

Another woman, had become so frustrated with the medical system, her experiences had led her to completely ignore her medical conditions. As a result, she let an abscess grow to the size of a grapefruit on her leg, leaving it difficult to even walk.

My experience was a collection of such interactions. Using only an offer of a granola bar as an icebreaker, each day I became collectively more amazed, at how my individual perspective changed, from a single, homogenous view of what makes a person homeless, to seeing individual faces, of a Vietnam veteran, a mental patient, a runaway, or a heroin addict. Sometimes, an individual would fall into all those categories and then some.

“ . . . my individual perspective changed, from a single, homogenous view of what makes a person homeless, to seeing individual faces. . . ”

— Mannick

I soon came to the frustrating realization that most of these individuals were in so deep a hole they could no longer see the light of day, much less have any hope of climbing their way out. Besieged by drugs, mental illness, and no one to lean on, life becomes a day-to-day existence.

How can we even imagine helping individuals, when the standard methods of even keeping in touch with an individual are unavailable?

And, just as I thought, I came upon no revelations.

But perhaps we'd all benefit by stopping now and then, and taking a closer look at what people are going through.



We Are Beggars

We do not take federal money, but depend on the generosity of others (and our own work) to continue this ministry. Our Christmas donations were down by 60% this year and so we ask that you remember us. On the next page, you'll find last year's expense summary and our 2003 budget.

Temenos Catholic Worker Budget

INCOME	BUDGET 2002	ACTUAL 2002	BUDGET 2003
Foundations			
Old First Presbyterian	500.00	500.00	350.00
Urban Ministry, PCUSA	1,500.00	1,500.00	500.00
Anonymous	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
SF Food Bank	750.00	750.00	550.00
Subtotal	12,750.00	12,750.00	11,400.00
Other			
Donations	35,929.60	29,655.51	40,300.00
Retreats/ Consultations/Workshops	3,100.00	25,000.98	10,000.00
Grants			35,000.00
Subtotal	39,029.60	54,656.49	85,300.00
TOTAL	51,679.60	67,406.49	96,700.00

EXPENSE	BUDGET 2002	ACTUAL 2002	BUDGET 2003
Administration			
Director	12,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00
Volunteer Coordinator	8,000.00	3,699.60	15,000.00
Rent *	5,151.60	5,151.60	24,000.00
Health Insurance	4,128.00	4,128.00	5,158.53
Van /Transportation	3,000.00	2984.90	3,000.00
Dental	1,200.00	454.60	600.00
Office Supplies	2,000.00	1985.20	2,000.00
Newsletter / Postage	2,200.00	1,355.10	2,400.00
Phone	3,000.00	3,355.10	3,500.00
Subtotal	40,679.60	35,114.10	67,428.53
Program			
Socks	1,000.00	1,155.20	1,000.00
Health / Nutritional Ed Materials	500.00	350.13	500.00
Respite / Transition Housing	6,000.00	9,552.21	9,000.00
Prescriptions / Bus Tickets	7,000.00	6,922.01	7,000.00
Food	5,000.00	8,550.25	9,000.00
Discretionary	2,000.00	2,250.01	2,000.00
Art Supplies	500.00	452.11	500.00
Subtotal	22,000.00	29,201.92	29,000.00
TOTAL	62,679.60	67,406.49	96,428.53

Note:

* office and kitchen was being donated rent free – value \$12,000

<p>In addition to the above, these listed items have been provided as “in-kind” donations. THANK YOU!:</p>	}	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Harm Reduction Supplies</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$3,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Orasure HIV Test</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$2,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Tokens / vouchers</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$2,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Medical Supplies</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$2,000.00</td> </tr> </table>	Harm Reduction Supplies	\$3,000.00	Orasure HIV Test	\$2,000.00	Tokens / vouchers	\$2,000.00	Medical Supplies	\$2,000.00
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GOOD FRIDAY PUBLIC LITURGY

We are beginning organization of our annual
Good Friday Public Liturgy
We invite volunteers
Call Fr. River

THE WEEKLY EUCHARIST

We continue our weekly Eucharist at
Hemlock Alley, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday Meals

We continue to provide a hot meal at the
Polk Street Needle Exchange on *Thursday nights*
If you would like to volunteer, call Fr. River



“As far as I am concerned, the greatest suffering is to feel alone, unwanted, unloved.”

The greatest suffering is also having no one, forgetting what an intimate, truly human relationship is, not knowing what it means to be loved, not having a family or friends.”

- - Mother Teresa of Calcutta

THANKS!!

Special Thanks to Mary Lou Gepplinger for her generous contribution of the use of her kitchen for the preparation of hot meals; to Mary Monihan for buying Christmas gifts, and to the students of Larkin Dorm at Stanford for providing Christmas gifts.