



PENIEL

July / August
2003

WHERE JACOB WRESTLED WITH GOD AND SURVIVED

Temenos Catholic Worker

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“There is no such thing as ‘my bread.’ All bread is ours and is given to me, to others through me and to me through others. For not only bread but all things necessary for sustenance in this life are given on loan to us with others and because of others and for others and to others through us.” (Meister Eckhart)

“Are you not a robber, you who consider your own that which has been given you solely to distribute to others? This bread which you have set aside is the bread of the hungry; this garment you have locked away is the clothing of the naked; those shoes which you let rot are the shoes of one who is barefoot; those riches you have hoarded are the riches of the poor.” (St. Basil the Great)

“They would sell their property and all they had and distribute the proceeds to others according to their need.” (Acts 2:42)

Recently I made a pilgrimage to Dorothy Day’s grave on Staten Island. As I prayed beside her grave, not far from her island cottage, and the Church in which she had her daughter baptized, one word repeatedly came to my mind—simplicity.

Her grave resides in a long line of graves all with the same flat grave stone for a marker as the others. One has to look for it to find it. It reads “Dorothy Day-1897-1980” with a small symbol of loaves and fishes and the inscription “Deo Gratis”, (“Thanks be to God). This day there were fresh flowers, a rosary, and several seashells on the stone. Simplicity, reflecting a life lived in simplicity.

Once when asked about advice on forming a Catholic Worker, Dorothy replied: “Keep it getting smaller.” For in smallness one can relate to people, as people.

Simplicity, voluntary poverty, was at the heart of her vocation. On that windy day images of the advertisements on

Time Square and of those we are daily bombarded with by the media rolled through my mind. Their message is “more is better. . . buy me and you will be happy.” In the process of obeying the message, greed becomes a god that isolates us from all life-giving sustenance into a hell of emptiness and never ending desire for more. And in the end—all is lost in death.

For Dorothy, simplicity brought freedom—freedom to have time for relationships, freedom to be present to people, and more importantly freedom to share of her material goods with others freely.

Politicians at all levels of government are being pushed to “do something” about homelessness. If there is a solution, it lies within the hearts of human beings, and a shifting of our priorities. Our three quotes and the life of Dorothy Day illustrate that our priority should be that of sharing, until all are provided for, and that comes from within

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ourselves. We have to be willing to give up, to let go of some of our material needs in order that all might have enough.

Simplicity is a witness – an affirmation of trust in God, and solidarity with the poor.

Praying at the grave of Dorothy was a humbling experience, for both in life and in death her witness of simplicity reminds us that we find our lives in giving them away.

Deo Gratis!



Love is Stronger than Death

Ruth Lassagne, beloved Aunt of Michael and Barbara McGinley, was remembered with a gift to Temenos. Her openness and faith in human nature lives on through the ministry this gift enables.

REVERSE DIRECTION RETREAT FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

In the Tenderloin Area of San Francisco

In the traditions of Dorothy Day & St. Vincent de Paul

September 11-14, 2003

Have you thought of doing spiritual direction with people who live on the streets? Have you wanted to experience spiritual direction with people on the margins?

This is an opportunity to experience a time of reflection with people living on the margins, a time of living and working with the young homeless adults who live in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco.

Join us for a four day program balanced with input, discussion, reflection, and hands-on-direction.

Cost--\$500.00 – includes room, food, and materials (transportation not included)

*** Contact Fr. River for more information ***

We Are Beggars

“Deo Gratis!” Thanks be to God for your continued support in these rough times. Even as the needs seem to increase, we continue day by day to minister, and in the months of May and June we have provided:

- * approximately 1465 meals;
- * Harm reduction services to 953 people;
- * 650 pairs of socks, 150 blankets;
- * Pastoral care to 285 people

We are often asked: “What is your job?” Our job is to be a presence of love to those who are the poorest of the poor. The only measure of success is if we have made someone’s life happier for the day or even for the moment.

Funds are short, and so we ask for your continued support. Please make checks out to:

Temenos Catholic Worker

Received for June: \$2880.92

Needed: \$3877.51

Balance on hand for June 30, 2003: \$1125.92

TODAY I RODE A CABLE CAR,
PAID MY HOTEL BILL,
AND SAW MY MONEY USED
TO ATTACK HOMELESS
PEOPLE.

Demonizing panhandlers
doesn’t help, it hurts.



WATCH THIS SPACE

Keep your mouse pointed to

www.temenos.org

which will soon feature a weekly

“Alien Street Priest”

column by River