



# Rochester Catholic Worker

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Rochester, New York — Summer 2014

## Social Exclusion Update:

**Civic Center Garage and Hancock Air National Guard Base** - Harry Murray

Over the past year, two issues we have been reporting on in the newsletter have been the impending eviction of homeless residents of the Civic Center Garage and the nonviolent campaign against weaponized Reaper drones at Hancock Air National Guard "Attack Wing" Base in Syracuse.

It might seem strange to cover homelessness and drones in a single article; however, there are many parallels. Both involve what sociologists call "social exclusion" – efforts to exclude some types of people from certain areas or activities – homeless persons from the Civic Center Garage and nonviolent demonstrators from Hancock Air Base. In both, the Criminal Justice System is involved in these efforts at exclusion – Judge Doran having written a letter in the name of the court demanding that the Garage address the homelessness "problem," and Judges Gideon and Jokl issuing and enforcing orders of protection against nonviolent demonstrators at the Hancock Air Base. Both are also related by the causal connection between military spending and poverty – the more the US spends on the military, the less we have to spend to improve people's lives.



*Civic Center Garage*

Finally, of course, both issues affect people's lives – and even their life expectancies – with risk of early death by exposure heightened by the proposed garage closing and death by drone a near certainty for individuals in Afghanistan as long as Hancock continues to operate drones. The ultimate social exclusion is killing – and that is what we are dealing with, whether indirectly at the garage or directly at Hancock.

The connection is also illustrated by the number of Catholic Workers who have been arrested for civil resistance at Hancock – from Rochester, Syracuse, Ithaca, New York City, Binghamton, Illinois, Iowa, and Connecticut. (And I apologize if I'm missing anyone). Catholic Workers know from experience that there is an intimate connection between homelessness and militarism.

Although the Civic Center LDC has been threatening to evict homeless residents of the garage for over a year, as of this writing, people are still sleeping in the garage, as they have been for over thirty years. A coalition of groups and individuals, led by the House of Mercy and including St. Joe's, has been working to locate a building in or near downtown that can serve as a shelter once the seemingly inevitable eviction process finally occurs; however, progress has been slow.

Two promising locations have been lost while we have attempted to work out details, the most difficult of which has been negotiating zoning changes or variances since the City Code prohibits two activities – sexually oriented businesses and homeless shelters – in the central city zone. One building found a new tenant, who was given a two

*(continued on p. 2)*



*Sister Grace in the garage.*

year lease. The other was sold to another bidder before we could make our second inspection visit.

We envision a shelter with minimal restrictions to attract those who have preferred the garage to more traditional shelters and to accommodate those who are banned from receiving DHS assisted shelter because they are on the "do not place" or sanctioned lists. We welcome suggestions for a location and offers of assistance (e.g., help to renovate a building once we find one, financial donations, organizations or agencies which may be willing to cooperate).

Meanwhile, in Syracuse, the campaign against murder by drone continues. On April 27, following a moving talk by Cornell West

on the connections among drones, poverty, and racism, nearly a hundred people, including Dr. West, marched on Hancock to witness against the MQ-9 Reaper drones being piloted there. Although police showed some of us lists of all previous arrestees with orders of protection (OOP) against us (protecting officers at the base from our nonviolent presence) and promised to arrest anyone with an OOP who was "in sight of" the base, there were no arrests. Court cases have continued in the wake of the acquittal of several resisters reported on in the last issue. In a bench trial, John Amidon was found not guilty of trespass and loitering for wearing a Grim Reaper costume and being pulled off a plastic barrier into the "no free speech" zone in front of the base by a police officer. A few weeks later, in a jury trial, Mary Anne Grady-Flores, of the Ithaca Catholic Worker, was found guilty of violating her order of protection. The jury was not allowed to be informed that, in the case of Dan Finlay, an appellate court had overruled his order of protection because the language was too vague.

Mary Anne faces up to a year in jail and will be sentenced on July 10th in DeWitt Town Court. At a pretrial hearing on March 8, Judge Gideon renewed our orders of protection for another year and scheduled at least one trial a month for the next year, beginning with Bea Dewing's trial on June 10, 2014 and ending with my trial on June 10 of 2015. So far, all trials will be of individuals except on March 10, when four persons (Ellen Barfield, Jules Orkin, Bev Rice, and Joan Pleune) will have a joint trial.

Almost all of us are facing a maximum of a year in jail plus two fifteen day sentences. Although in some ways it is a benefit to have my trial a year in the future (over two years after the demonstration in which I was arrested!), it is also a pain. Because my order of protection was renewed, I have to face the likelihood that each time I cross an international border (even Canada) or even go on a domestic flight, I may be held and questioned (as a number of my co-conspirators have) because of the order of protection.

Although drone strikes have apparently been discontinued in Pakistan as of January, 2014, drone killings continue in Yemen and, presumably, Afghanistan. Because it is a war zone, drone killings in Afghanistan (where the Hancock drones fly) are less transparent than those in other countries. However, in an article in Prism, Dr. Larry Lewis revealed that he has conducted a secret study for the Pentagon which found that in Afghanistan, the percentage of civilians killed by drone strikes was significantly higher than the percentage killed in manned (personned?) aircraft.



*An RAF Reaper drone*

Let's wish the Dorothy Day Program a happy Birthday! One Year ago this past January!!!! This is a "**Housing First**" Project" - the only one in Rochester. It's objective is to make available decent housing for homeless folks with the minimum of rules while we get them back on their feet and out of the hospital emergency rooms.

Quoting **Dorothy Day**: "*WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO DO IS CHANGE THE WORLD, MAKE IT A LITTLE SIMPLER FOR PEOPLE TO FEED, CLOTHE AND SHELTER THEMSELVES AS GOD INTENDED THEM TO DO*".

This is a 12 unit building that has 6 studios and 6 one-bedroom apartments. We have retained 6 veterans who have remained from the previous owner. As far as the program units go we have 2 studios for staff and 4 for our program residents.

Now, let's look at **John K!** who was one of our first residents in the Dorothy Day House program. He moved into one of our completely furnished, one bedroom apartments, with a friend he has known for over 5 years. They didn't have anything but what was on their backs. But within one year, they both moved on.



John went from sharing a bedroom to a room in an extended stay Resident Hotel. That's what he wanted. What we were able to do for him was to get him back on his feet with all the services that he was lacking since he did live on the street for many years. His help came from many places such as: **St. Joe's, House of Mercy, St. Mary's Church and the County of Monroe.**



*the late John K*

I want to tell you about the first time John was asked to join our Program. It was 4:00 p.m. on a Sunday, we had him, and his soon to be roommate, meet at St. Joes' for dinner. After dinner we took them upstairs to the clothing closet to pick out some new clothing for both of them. All the while they were shedding tears of happiness. We then took them to their apartment. With their hands full of clothing I gave them their keys. I told them I will check in on them later. John turned to me and said "WHEN DO WE HAVE TO GO?" I told him they don't have to go anywhere. This was their place as long as they want to live here.

I didn't check on them until 5:00 a.m. As I looked in, both of them were lying on top their twin size beds fully dressed including their shoes. I had to turn the light on, which woke John up, then I asked him "why are they sleeping fully dressed" He responded to me with a very solid look, "We didn't know when the people were coming to put us out" "John" I said "like we said this is yours as long as you want

it" he got up and hugged me so tight I had to tell him something to so he could loosen his grip. Anyway, He did sleep in his boots for the next week! This goes to show you, **YOU CAN SEE GOD IN JUST THE SIMPLEST ACT OF KINDNESS.**

I want to invite anyone who is interested in exploring the sponsorship of one of our homeless individuals for 3 months at a cost of \$400.00 per month to give me a call 585-500-0104 or email me at [kkrobinson1959@gmail.com](mailto:kkrobinson1959@gmail.com). This would help us cover our initial transition and housing costs.



**Smiley R.I.P. (1950-2014)** - Harry Murray

Lewis Byrd, known to all at St. Joe's as Smiley, was for many years the heart of the Saturday meal. I first met him when he was working at St. Peter's Kitchen back around 1991. A few months later, he moved into Saint Joe's and became an integral part of the house. He became my partner in running the Saturday meals – at first along with Stanley Webster, Bob Irish, Ben Tarver – the Saturday “crew” the 1990's. Stanley, Bob, and Ben all died many years ago, but Smiley kept on as my main co-worker. He was also one of my best friends for many, many years.

He was the person who made everyone welcome, especially when the Miami Dolphins were winning. And he wasn't above giving some sly digs to Buffalo Bills fans when the occasion arose. The Saturday

meal is provided by volunteer groups from a number of churches – and Smiley befriended them all. He was our official DJ – bringing in his favorite jazz and blues, sometimes introducing even experienced musicians to artists with whom they were not familiar. And after he retired, the groups always asked how he was doing.

He was born in 1950 in Fort Pierce, Florida. He told me that he came north after being beaten by a group of men with a baseball bat, a beating which affected his back for the rest of his life. He spent some time working in North Carolina, I believe, then came to Rochester sometime in the 1970's.

Smiley kept his philosophy simple, but he was willing to share it when appropriate. Many times, I heard him advise a young man: “Don't ever give up your apartment to move in with a woman. Just when you're down and out, she'll throw you out and you'll be on the streets.”

He waged a long battle with diabetes and renal disease, which took a major turn for the worse about five years ago, when he had to go on dialysis after some frightening hospitalizations. Smiley was a great man, but he was not a good patient. He was terrified of the medical establishment – and went through a number of doctors, who would throw him out of the practice for noncompliance, until I lined him up with Stephen Shultz, who persevered with him. “You ain't gonna touch me THERE!”

His last years were difficult, and there were times when he was angry with Tim and myself for “tricking” him into going to the hospital the time they finally decided that he had to go on dialysis for the rest of his life. He rarely made it back to St. Joes after he started dialysis, but he always asked who had been asking about him.

The County held his body for over a month because they were not able to locate any of his family. Through the good grace of Monique Latimer, we were able to have his funeral at Latimer Funeral Home on Thursday May 8, followed by a burial at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery. It was attended by a number of his friends from St. Joe's, including friends from a number of the Saturday church groups – Gates Presbyterian, Immaculate Conception, and St. Paul's Episcopal – plus a representative from the assisted living center which had been his home for the past several years. It was a wonderful gathering of people who loved Smiley.

Smiley, my life has been so much richer because you were my friend – I hope when we meet again you will say the same.



## Comings & Goings.....

**Mike H** is scheduled to return in the late summer after spending this past year with the Duluth Catholic House/ community.....appears that his significant other has lined up employment at the Neighborhood Center across the street from us...

We are in deep discussion on whether we will repeat our **summer shelter** program.....had some problems last summer that we don't want to repeat.....it proved to be popular.....first time we had women since our early days.....last summer we had 10 beds for men and five for women.....Stay tuned.

Our annual **Memorial Day picnic** held outdoors in our parking lot showed once again how popular it is.....upwards of 300 feasted on Zweigels, baked beans, salad, and numerous trays of buns from our bakery.....we bring out our dining room tables and chairs along with the chairs and tables in the hospitality area to our parking lot.....and the weather was ideal.

**Bobby**, our kitchen manager and cook, who has spent more than six months with the LA Catholic Worker community has decided to return in the late summer.....seems the 1500 daily meals served required prepping vegetables for hours on end.....not much diversity like St Joe's.



**Lisa De Metsenaere, Manager of the Pizza Hut located at 3120 S. Winton Rd. and her cheerful assistant, Oscar Aranda provide leftover pizza slices which are distributed to our guests during Sunday Drop-In at Saint Joe's.**

**Pizza Hut** on Monroe Avenue just south of 590 had supplied St Joe's with its left over pizzas from its noon pizza bar until it closed two years ago.....we lined up the Pizza Hut on S.Winton Road to supply us with the remnants of their Noon pizza bar for the last two years.....it is picked up every Saturday and used in our Sunday meal program.....we thank their staff for saving the pieces for they are much appreciated by our guests.

Our **Free Store** (take what you need, share what you have) has been a great success since it opened at 125 Caroline St. nine months ago.....clothes, small appliances, TV's that are in good condition can be dropped off on Wednesdays 10:30 – Noon and 4:30- 6.....call Jasmin 353-9882 for any questions.

As we prepared for Santiago's appearance in **Buffalo's immigration court** on May 28, at which we had no realistic hope of another continuance, the most likely outcome being "extended voluntary departure" We left court that day astonished, having received continuance for another 16 months

and an opportunity to build a case for not having him removed. The lawyer said, "the judge was ready to deport him today!" but like Daniel in the lion's den, Santiago walked out unharmed.

The coming months hold a lot of "homework" for us, trying to locate evidence of Santiago's presence and employment here in the U.S. over the past 14 years. We also need to raise \$3,750. It is a lot of work and a lot of money.

### Sunday Pizza Courtesy of Pizza Hut on S. Winton Road

We would like to thank Lisa De Metsenaere and Oscar Aranda and all the rest at Pizza Hut for taking the time to store the pizza during the week for us to collect on Saturday.

We think pizza is the "perfect food" and definitely recommend Pizza Hut's Veggie Lovers pizza for an easy dinner (with a salad of course!)

**Thanks Pizza Hut.**

A friend who works at a Catholic Worker house in Mexico posted something on Facebook that broke my heart. It was a video of an experiment in which Mexican children were shown two baby dolls, identical except for the color of their plastic skin. Child after child was shown the dolls and asked which was pretty, which ugly, which doll was good or which doll was bad, and child after child identified the white doll as pretty and good, and the black doll as ugly and bad.

One or two were able to say "they're the same," but others, asked why the doll on the left was ugly or bad, said clearly, "because it's brown." Racism is deep, not only in our culture here in the United States, but in lots of other places. I remember being in El Salvador and watching TV, and realizing that although most people on the streets have Indian features, all the actors on TV looked European.

Racism is our inheritance, along with the profound economic inequalities in the world. Most of the kids in that video had light brown skin, somewhere in between those two dolls. They are "mestizo," mixed race, which in Mexico means that they are descended from Indian women raped by Spanish soldiers, centuries ago. That's most of the population of Mexico.

In this country, we have the legacy of slavery. When I was growing up, the image of slavery I got from school and movies (like "Gone With the Wind") was enforced servitude, people being made to work and not being free to leave. The reality was so much worse. Have you seen "12 Years a Slave"? or read Toni Morrison's book "Beloved"? To be a slave was to be treated as less than human. Because I am white, I have to look at the legacy I inherited from slavery: a legacy of denial and blindness as well as privilege.

So that, I think, is original sin. Original sin isn't some stain on our human character because Adam and Eve ate some

apples. It's the human legacy of inequality and injustice that we often can't even see because it's normal. That was what hit me, watching "12 Years a Slave": all that used to be legal. What horrors am I accepting as normal, today? How about the 80% of the world living on less than \$10 a day? How about, it costs as much to gift-wrap an item on Amazon as most people in El Salvador earn in a day? Or that little kids are growing up in neighborhoods where I'm scared to drive down the street?

Rachel McGuire tells the story of a white woman at a conference on racism, who, feeling the target of

accusations about this collective legacy, cried out, "I wasn't there!" When I read that, I recognized the feeling. It's not my fault. I'm not to blame. But you know what - it's not about fault, or blame. It's about responsibility. We've inherited a world of racism and injustice, and some of us benefit from it. So what are we going to do about it?

*(continued on p. 7)*

## *Get involved in race summit*

**Coalition is focusing on effects of racism  
and poverty on Rochester community**

Increasingly in this community, candid talk about race isn't being relegated to mostly hush-hush conversations. Thanks to initiatives like Facing Race, Embracing Equity, the often emotional topic is being tackled more openly with candor and respect.



First, I think, we name it. We look at it without fear and recognize these gross inequalities and feel the anger and shame and horror without hiding from it. And then, well, I don't have any long-term answer but I think we commit ourselves to keeping our eyes open. We move out of our comfortable blindness and into recognizing that the system is not fair and we've got the easy side of the equation, the side where there's three meals a day and shoes and running water and people being polite to us in stores and at airports because of the way we look, dress and speak.

And we recognize the people on the hard side of that equation as our sisters and brothers, with the same need to be fully alive and fully themselves that we have, and the same loves and hopes and aspirations. And we recognize that our privilege is a handicap that we can't even see. And we repent of it, not with sackcloth and ashes, but with humility and listening and open eyes.

Like the man in the Gospel, we are blind from birth, and it's not our fault or our parent's fault, but we sure do need to be healed of it. Let God put mud on our eyes, and may we see the reality around us.

May the next generation of children see every doll as beautiful.

**The price of our gun policy can be seen in this  
breathtaking statistic:**

More Americans have died from guns here in the United States since 1970 (nearly 1.4 million) than American soldiers have died in all the wars in our country's history over more than 200 years (about 1.2 million).

***"Hard as I should find the monastic life, I should find it a great deal easier than working in a Catholic Worker's hostel where it seems, one is never alone for a second."***

**- W. H. Auden**

## St. Joseph's House of Hospitality Rochester Catholic Worker Community

*Some of us live in houses; some of us live on the street; some of us have a room of our own, or a bed and a place to keep; some of us have a cot or piece of a couch or patch of floor to return to each night; some hold special positions of power and roles with specific responsibilities, some do whatever they can. Our aim is to try each day to "build a new society in the shell of the old" as we practice the various works of mercy and labor with whatever resources, physical as well as spiritual, that we have been given at the time.*

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### House Needs:

Prayers  
Butter  
**Laundry Soap Powder**  
Men's Underwear (32-44)

Sugar  
**Boots/Sneakers**  
**Jeans**  
Jelly/Jam

**BLEACH**  
Toilet Paper  
**Coffee/Mugs**  
Single Sheets

Hoodies  
39-gal. Trash Bags  
**Razors**  
**BATH TOWELS**

**Athletic Socks**  
Pillows  
**Large Jackets**  
**Gloves/Hats**

### CALENDAR

**July 7, 2014 Summer Shelter opens**

**Aug 30, 2014 Summer Shelter closes**

**Sept 01, 2014 Labor Day Picnic**

**Oct 06 – 10, 2014 House closed for cleaning**

**Oct 13, 2014 Winter Shelter opens**

**Nov 23, 2014 Foot & Hair Clinic**

### CELEBRANTS:

6-10-14 Fr. Bob Worth  
6-17-14 Rev. Chava Redonnet  
6-24-14 Charlotte Barnard  
7-01-14 Fr. Larry Tracy  
7-08-14 Sr. Grace Miller  
7-15-14 Tim McGowan  
7-22-14 Rev. Matthew Leah Nivkoloff  
7-29-14 Minister Mark Edbujor  
8-05-14 Fr. Jim Callan  
8-12-14 Mike Boucher  
8-19-14 Cathy Mrzywka  
5-26-14 Rev. Matthew Leah Nivkoloff  
9-02-14 Fr. Patrick  
9-09-14 Stegios Skatharoudis- Sufi service  
9-16-14 Deacon Bill Coffey  
9-23-14 Rev. Matthew Leah Nivkoloff  
9-30-14 Rev. Chava Redonnet  
10-7-14 Stegios Skatharoudis-Sufi Service  
10-14-14 Deacon Tom Driscoll  
10-21-14 Rev. Matthew Leah Nivkoloff  
10-28-14 Rev. Lawrence Hargrave  
11-4-14 Stegios Skatharoudis- Sufi Service  
11-11-14 Tim McGowan