

# THE SERVANT SONG

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## How Are We to Govern Ourselves?

by Brayton Shanley

A presidential election year is always a good opportunity to appraise our governance. Because our attention is literally overwhelmed with the political images and rhetoric of the candidates, it is essential to grasp the true meaning of all these images. Further, we model to the world our brand of democracy which puts inordinate faith in this process of seating and unseating a president to such an extent that one could easily say, that in the United States, our true religious passion is politics. Voting has always been promoted as a cherished right, fundamental to our freedom loving democracy and the best hedge against oppressive dictatorships and keeping the peace.

When an individual says I believe in the power of the vote, or I believe in representative democracy in this country, the question must be asked: Who is the "I"? Is it "I" an American citizen primarily, who happens to be Christian, or is it the "I" the Christian who happens to be a citizen of this country? If I am a Christian, a Christ follower first and foremost, so that His name represents the deep core of my identity, then it becomes primary that I examine the true nature of the State, governance, and political power to realize fully what I am supporting. Is the spirit of one's Christian faith in harmony with the values of the State as we know it today, or is there serious moral dissonance?

Biblically, the State and royal power were always a justice concern for people Israel. Even when Kings were considered divinely ordained, prophets emerged to rail against their injustices. Yet, every King had his prophet, and because the prophets' voice was one of ill-omen, they often were expelled. Still their voices were considered of God. Their fiery words of truth burn for us even today.

With Jesus, the view of monarchy suffered a drastic change. Herod the Great, still in power when Jesus was born, was so threatened by the birth of this child that he ordered the murder of all children two years and under. This hostile attitude of the ruling power over and against the mission of this Messiah, plus Herod's desire to eliminate the him as an infant, is Jesus' first brush with political power (Matt. 2:13-18). This story leaves one with a deep impression of their different natures—worldly and Divine.

The Prophet Jesus' mission was then, as it remains today, to expose the injustice of the Herods and to establish a reign of God on Earth. To the degree that we identify our lives with Jesus and his spirit of peace will be the degree to which we will progressively become aware of the passion for crucifixion of the truth among ruling powers as they have evolved since Herod.

The next clash we see between the power of Jesus and the powers of this world is in his temptation. The devil tempts Jesus (Luke 4:6-7) on a high mountain with "all this power and glory of these kingdoms...if you will prostrate yourself before me it shall be yours." Jacques Ellul illuminates the passage: "The kingdoms of this world are not just the Herod



monarchy...according to these texts all power and glory of the 'kingdoms,' all that has to do with...political authority belongs to the devil...Those who hold political power receive it from him and depend on him." (*Anarchy and Christianity*)

Jesus singularly and irrevocably rejects the offer without denying that Satan holds the power to grant such an offer. The point he makes is simple and leaves a permanent mark on all those that choose to follow him: "Be gone Satan, you shall worship the Lord and the Lord alone shall you serve" (Matt 4:10). That is, the way of Jesus is contrary to the powers of this world, contrary to advantages of the gold mine of media publicity, contrary to money, "the mother's milk of politics" and what flows from that milk: the bankrolling of the oppressors, the controlling violence of the privileged elite. Power politics has the taint of corrupt money practices and self-serving violence.

In the United States, every person elected President since Franklin Roosevelt has been the candidate who spent the largest amount of money. In the last presidential campaign, the candidates spent a total of two billion dollars. Was this money well spent in the service of the common good or was it money ill-spent with candidates reduced to saying what had to be said to get elected? And whose money was spent on these campaigns? Whose best interests are at stake, the poor the marginalized? Add to this, the fact that every president elected, as far as back as George Washington, used war and state-sanctioned violence to advance the economic influence of the country.

If, with our elected officials, we hope to change injustice, then becoming the Roman

violence made by power-driven institutions of government and the fear dominated body politic. The life-threatening forces of violence against the poor, the unborn and the so-called enemy cast a dark shadow over our defenseless world. Yet due to our distracted state, this darkness can remain invisible to our spiritual and moral senses, and therefore hard to resist. It becomes impossible to imagine the political alternative, so we get caught in a death trap frantically fighting violence with violence.

With the phrase, "The ruler of the nations lord it over them" (Matt 20:20-25), Matthew's gospel addresses domination once again. Which one of the sons of Zebedee, James, or John, will sit at the right hand of Jesus? The sad historical truth is that this same ambition will find itself in all "religions" as "religious causes" will yield to war in the name of good. But how many wars can be waged in the name of Jesus' love and rejection of hierarchical domination? Herein lies his conclusion: "The Son of Man came to serve not to be served and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28). What political party or candidate mirrors this sentiment? When Jesus warns about "lording over them," he says simply: "You will not be like them," clearly stating that we will always look to "serve others." Love, the highest good, is a way of being, not an abstract idea, and to make it operate requires a structure that is not dominated by self-protective fear. Can this love ever flourish in our present structure of American politics?

It's interesting to note that the mission of Jesus was not to reform the State but to establish a nonviolent following which evolved into nonviolent subcultures; moral atoms that influenced the faith of human societies in a more life-saving way than win/lose politics. But, the strength of their effect would result from their being a counter-cultural sign of God's nonviolence, values in opposition to the modern state that cultivates the power to oppress as it lives and thrives under the protection of its military. Jesus influences through love of all beings, and his "politics" functions principally to meet the direct and urgent needs of the marginalized first but endorses a compassion that embraces all.

### Every Day is Election Day

Nowhere in the gospels are we encouraged to vote for someone who hires someone else to help others in distress—the elderly, poor or children at risk. Nowhere in the gospels are we encouraged to pay someone else to do the works of healing, compassion and mercy, while we continue to live our own self-contained lives in reasonable safety from their troubles. The gospels encourage us, command us, to put others before ourselves and to assist the neighbor in need. This being true, **every day is Election Day**, and we elect ourselves daily to seek out the truth and to be personally invested in alleviating unnecessary affliction of human suffering caused by the

### Fighting Violence with Violence

The best instincts in any president can be contaminated by the hubris of political ambition and the constant demands for

continued on page 7

# My Journey from Silence to Solidarity: Agape Anniversary Keynote

by Roy Bourgeois M.M.

I don't know what can be more important than working for peace, fighting for justice and equality, nonviolence, and mercy. You all here have been at this for many years. It took me a while to get on that road of peace and justice, equality, nonviolence. In our little community, where I grew up in rural Southern Louisiana, we didn't question our country's foreign policy; we didn't question our church's teaching; we loved our hard working families, but we were missing something that is so basic to humanity—love, equality, justice.

I went to a segregated high school. A priest, a teacher, our macho football coaches, our parents, myself, all my classmates—I cannot recall anyone saying we have a problem here. It's called racism. What I did hear was macho: "It's all a tradition; yes, we're separate but equal."

Isaiah, said people would call evil good; they would take a lie and call it truth. Many of us, prior to the lie of Vietnam, went off to war—young, so ignorant, believing we were patriotic, that our cause was global. But something happens when we go to war. As in Iraq and Afghanistan, we are learning that we are not made for war. This is what happened to me and to so many in Vietnam. We cannot go about the business of killing and go on with our lives as before. We have been created so that the Divine has given us a heart, a conscience, feelings, compassion. When we go to war, we come back wounded, our hope shattered—so many suicides, marriage break ups, PTSD. We are not made for war.

I had only a glimpse of this during my year in Vietnam—the madness of it all, the suffering, and death so close. I came home from Vietnam, grateful to be alive and the Spirit moved in me. My faith and God became close. I started having these weird thoughts about being called to be a peacemaker, called to the priesthood. I talked to an army chaplain who told me to check out Maryknoll, the missionaries who work in twenty countries around the world, serving the poorest of the poor. I applied and was accepted.

Maryknoll was a new beginning, a time to rediscover the hope and joy, good years preparing for serving the poor in a foreign country. I was ordained a Catholic priest years later, in the 70's and went to Bolivia, my home for the next five years. The poor became my teachers, just as the children in the orphanages and the families of Vietnam were.

I was introduced to liberation theology which gave hope to the poor and dispossessed. In Galatians, there is neither male nor female, slave or free, black or white. This theology, different from the theology I was weaned on, gave me hope.

As a Catholic, it was very top down—the Pope, God, Bishops, priests, and the rest of us. With liberation theology, I learned that all important word *solidaridad*, to accompany, to walk with another, to make the struggle of others our struggle. Solidarity, in Bolivia, meant quite a number were killed, many arrested. I was among those arrested, and, in my fifth year there, I was kicked out of the country and came home.

After Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated, a small group of us went to Fort Benning and The School of the Americas and said, "Not in Our Name". This prophet gave us what we needed to just simply go out to



penetrate a high security area, in army uniforms, dressed as high ranking officers. We went near the barracks where the Salvadorans were housed and being trained in the art of killing. We climbed a tall pine tree, and when the last lights went out, we said, "Bishop Romero this is for you brother".

We had a powerful boom-box with Romero's speech to the military calling on them to stop the killing, lay down their weapons, disobey their superior officers who were telling them to kill their fellow *compañeros* and obey that higher law of God: "Thou shall not kill".

His voice boomed into the barracks. It was a sacred moment. The military didn't quite see it that way and came out with guns and dogs, arrested us and brought us to the county jail for trial sent us to prison for a year and a half.

After the killing of six Jesuits, a co-worker and her daughter at their university, a group of friends and I planned a water only fast for 35 days. A Congressional committee documented that over 50,000 soldiers from seventeen countries were trained here, learning commando tactics, psychological warfare, counterinsurgency techniques. The UN reported that those who killed Bishop Romero, the Jesuits, and their co-workers and who raped and killed the church women, (and the list went on), were trained at this school.

So, now, after that first fast, we gather at the main gate of Fort Benning every November in solidarity with out sisters and brothers and with those who are on the receiving end of the "training", at \$30 million a year, paid for with our tax money. A hundred came; then, a thousand, five thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand. We march solemnly to the white gate, carrying white crosses, holding photographs and names of the victims. Thousands in unison

call out—"Presente", the person is present with us. Many weep.

## Women's Ordination

Work for peace and justice, equality, is a marathon, a lifelong struggle and our hope is strong. We're not going away. We're keeping our hands on the plow. It was within the SOA movement and addressing the injustice that it represented that I discovered an injustice much closer to home, in my church, in colleges, and peace groups where I was talking about why we must close the SOA. Devout Catholic Women shared their deep faith and call to the priesthood. It kept me awake at night. Incredible. In all those years of seminary, and years since then, I cannot ever recall a time of talking about this with my fellow priests—why couldn't women be ordained?

All we heard was "our tradition"—only baptized males can be ordained. When I heard that word "tradition", it really brought me back to my little town and our segregated schools. Then, I began to think that my church, the Catholic Church and most faith traditions I have known, all profess that we are created of equal worth and dignity. The Pope and all of us priests said together the same words, that the call to the priesthood was a gift.

It wasn't complicated. We're not talking about heavy theology here, just that basic question that we are all equal. "Call" comes from the Divine. Who are we as men to say that our call to the priesthood is authentic, but your call as women is not? I saw Church teachings that simply defied faith and reason and could not stand up to scrutiny. At the very root of that teaching, I saw sexism.

Sexism, like homophobia is a sin, and all other forms of discrimination are never the way of God, the Divine. In this case, it is the teaching of men who feel threatened that we might lose our power. I saw here a grave injustice against women and our loving God

who calls both men and women to the priesthood. We've all learned that our silence is the voice of complicity that blesses that injustice and says it's okay. I found it hard to sleep at night, to be at peace, to fill this hole in my heart. I had to break this silence.

I started with baby steps at first. Then I was invited to a big religious conference in Rome, to speak about the SOA and US foreign policy and to go on public radio with fifteen minutes live, in three different languages. Wow! It went really well for thirteen minutes—little spots about the SOA, the School of Assassins and Dictators. Everybody was very supportive.

Then, I said: "Now, I have to address an injustice much closer to home, this injustice in our Church **until women can be ordained**". That's when the manager came in and signaled to stop. A Gregorian chant started. He was just was so afraid of losing his job, but I said to myself: "Say it!"

I slept well that night. I got a call from my Maryknoll headquarters: "What happened at the Vatican?" No big thing. We have to keep speaking truth to power, speaking what we know in our hearts, to get to the truth. Wherever I speak of SOA people get the package deal—not only militarism but racism, sexism, homophobia, all these connections. How easy, how convenient, to separate them.

I hear that I cannot talk about these issues. It's going to affect my ministry. I hear from so many priests: "**I support you and the ordination of women, but I'm not willing to go public.**" I think that day is coming. Speaking out about this issue of gender equality or rather gender inequality in the Catholic Church, I received this very serious letter from the Vatican, giving me thirty days to recant for having caused grave scandal in the Catholic Church calling for the ordination of women or I'd be excommunicated automatically.

As for that word, "scandal"; when most Catholics hear that word, "scandal", they do not think about the ordination of women. I withdrew into solitude, quiet time in nature, to really clarify my thoughts: "What's going on here? What will be my response that will keep me at peace, keep me faithful?"

I sent a letter to the Vatican, bringing up this issue of the primacy, the sacredness of conscience, a lifeline to the Divine which urges us to do the right thing, what we know in our heart to be the truth. We're free. We feel an inner joy when we follow our conscience.

I sent off that letter, the hardest thing to do, about three years ago now. I got no response. Then I drove to Louisiana to meet with my family, a traditional Catholic family. We lost my mother five years before. My Dad is elderly, and he's still in the old house where we grew up. All the family still lives in that small town. I'm the only one to have left.

When I got home, my sister and my brother took me aside and said: "You're going to break Daddy's heart." We've heard of that with our activism, you're going to upset people—parents, siblings. It was a sleepless night. The next day, it was just my sister, my brother, my Dad, and I was hoping that somehow my siblings might bring my Dad on board that he might, hearing from them, be supportive of what I am doing.

My sister just throws it out: "Daddy what are you thinking?" He's very soft

*continued on page 7*



# The Politics of Vision: Election Year and a Post-College Retreat at Agape

by Suzanne Belote Shanley

Agape continues to reach out to young adults with ongoing retreats, rural immersions (recent four day program with Holy Cross College), visits by undergrads, grads and others who come fresh out of JVC (Jesuit Volunteer Corps) or some other community experience. We recently launched a new program at Agape, a post-college, grad school retreat, by gathering 15 young people, some of them from the Creatively Maladjusted, Agape-linked grad school group in Boston, others former interns and retreatants, and some totally new to Agape.

We began the retreat, just four days before the 2012 election, as we always do, in a circle, sharing our lives, followed by a silent meditation under the starless, Sandysque, evening sky. I read aloud a poem from Denise Levertov's final book before her death, *This Great Unknowing: Last Poems* (New Directions), as I reflected on the role of "Poetry, Mysticism and the Prophetic Voice," in the midst of the ravages of Superstorm-Frankenstorm Sandy.

I suggested to those in our circle, that literature, music, the arts, gift us with an antidote to the profligacy of the election with its posturing and mean-spiritedness. I led with the poem, "That Day" in which Levertov renders an epiphany of "fifty years ago" while with her mother in Switzerland. In what is obviously a mystical revelation, mother and daughter see of "a shaft, a column, /a defined body, not of light but of silver rain," as it "advanced" towards them, "unswervingly, at a steady pace..." They rise to their feet, "breathless," as the advancing "column" wraps them in its "weave of wet" after which they "laughed for joy, astonished." I asked my friends: Can such experiences of awe in nature and in life, offer us solace in the midst of unremitting darkness and negativity of an election year, while climate change ravages our cities?

Brayton began the morning reflection on the suffering of the refugees in New Jersey and New York, connecting Sandy and the coming elections, by contrasting the rich spiritual implications of The Beatitudes as a blueprint for the Christian life, with the counterpoint of politics—gospel happiness, versus political "happiness". The shallow "happiness" over the power the comes from demonizing the enemy, from spending two billion dollars on promoting oneself and destroying the other in a presidential campaign is exposed when weighed against the hunger, thirst and deprivation of those impacted by Sandy. We live in the land of gross disparity, of anti-Beatitudes.

Brayton likened politics to macho football and boxing muscle-flexing, set against the climate-change induced rage of Sandy, and the breathtaking comment of Governor Cuomo: "The East River met the Hudson River." Apocalyptic images from New York and New Jersey, speak of a country not reading the signs of the times. Meek, or God-molded people do not ravage the earth which gives them sustenance. In the anti-



Beatitudes of American politics, in the race to be "first", losing is not an option. War-makers, propped up by a political system that is anything but meek, thrust the entire political spectrum into a reversal of the purity of heart required of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Stephanie, a core member of the Creatively Maladjusted, observed that power for its own sake wants "its own world view vindicated" unlike the "truth of the world" which comes out of a Beatitude Community. For Jerrod, an aspiring Unitarian Universalist minister and army chaplain, the intersection of justice and mercy located in Jesus and in the Sermon on the Mount, leads him to the idea that mercy doesn't seem to be about justice. He sensed that his call to minister to those in the military may be in conflict with the mercy implicit in enemy love. The community process is helping him to reconcile what he sees as the dichotomies of justice and mercy.

Sasha shared her encounter just a few days before with a homeless labeled by well-intentioned people as untouchable. Many of us, she observes, adhere to the "Prosperity Gospel" holding on to wealth and position rather than honoring the un-showered, unrecognized among us.

We spoke of the implications of gender and elective office, asking: If a woman were President of the US, would we fight fewer wars? What about two women running against each other? What would that look

like? Harmonizing themasculine and feminine prevents us from demonizing men. Most agreed, reluctantly, however, that women in a dominative male power culture do try to emulate men (Margaret Thatcher in the Falkland Islands and Madeleine Albright in Iraq) with a readiness to kill in war.

Consolation comes from building community. Members of The Creatively Maladjusted are already living in intentional community in Boston, a direct result of their Agape experiences; others expressed a longing to live in a community but the burden of college loans and their repayment depletes them of energy, of creativity, neutralizing encounters with awe. The concept of, or actual resistance to, these numbing claims on their imagination is absent in their lives for the most part. Fear of repercussions reigns when one is saddled with loans whose default would result in permanent marginalization—no credit and few options for employment.

I offered excerpts from a talk Daniel Berrigan SJ gave for Agape's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, in which he explains that the word vote comes from the Latin word *voveo*, to vow, "issuing from the very human and not from this murky bottomless pit, the inhuman—represented by imperial culture." Further, says Berrigan, *voveo* implies "devoted, devotional" and that we "cast a vote as though one were casting away one's conscience, as though from that frivolous moment one could justify the inhuman." For

Daniel, vow versus vote comes down on the side of "saying no to enemies of life in order to say a resounding yes to life itself."

We asked each other, what it means to vote for the lesser of two evils. Does voting fill our deepest core of being with the truth of the Beatitudes and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount? Obama's use of drones for indiscriminate killing of the so-called enemy, included as well, the children of human beings targeted for assassination, a hallmark of Obama's foreign policy. Can one vote for Obama we asked, and still be a Christian?

The members of the group, for the most part, want to believe in participatory democracy, which, although probably non-existent in reality, does offer alternatives such as Jill Stein of the Green party who was suggested as a responsible vote. These moral choices are especially disturbing to students who feel disenfranchised and angry over their enormous debt.

Anger, has its pitfalls, Tim said, especially anger at those in power, which can "thwart everything." Taking a prophetic stand, in a culture not trained to see alternative thinking and acting, as a value also evokes anger, said Maria who asked: "Does the prophetic stand create change in a system that doesn't know how to respond?"

Stephanie and Sara felt that they had their feet in both worlds. Alternatives, such as the Maladjusteds and Agape, while in the mainstream, law school and job searching, created in their minds, what Stephanie called "cognitive dissonance." "Why should I have to play the game" she asked?

The need for urgency resonated with Shea who discussed deadly consequences of fossil fuels and the dire realities of climate change. He invited us not to wait for the Perfect President, but to act now, consider a Keystone Blockade, named after the pipeline from Canada to the US which, he said, "could take us over the tipping point in climate change if we are not already there".

Sara noted that unlike children whose feet take them at breakneck speed to their destination, many of us are conditioned by fear, calculating every step. If we cannot return to a child-like state, Jerrod observed, maybe we may become less fearful through community. While on a silent walk in the Quabbin Reservoir, with other retreat participants, Jerrod observed the protection he felt with people on either side of him in contrast to military maneuvers in open spaces where he feels vulnerable and dodges for cover. In reality, however, he sighed, "Most of us do live in fear rather than in security".

Our liturgical gathering, created by these newly-bonded fifteen souls, reverberated with the steady drumming of the Native American and African drums in a circle of caring. Awe reigned, for a brief moment, while something like Levertov's "column" of light caused us to rise "to our feet, breathless". We embraced with the sign of peace, experiencing in our diverse ways, the "light," a column of love that had "steadily" come on us. We "laughed for joy," astonished.

## Community's Unconscious Power

by Tim Barnes

Last year I helped write a research funding proposal for the first time. On the day before the proposal was due, our boss decided that the best way to capture the interest of funding agencies was to promise that whatever discoveries we made would

make their way into drone aircraft. I asked my peers how they felt about this development; while many of my fellow students expressed the same kind of hesitation that I instinctively felt, all the faculty members that I talked to saw no

problems with it at all. They had made the conscious effort to produce well-reasoned and rational arguments backing their opinions, but they were simultaneously unconsciously shaped by the community that defined their acceptable range of moral values.

The relationship between conscious rationale and the unconscious neurological actions that surface in emotions and dreams

has never been clear. The Christian tradition highlights the tension between the two in the moral realm. On one hand, we are called to serve *only* with a joyful heart, and if our actions do not spontaneously arise from a subconscious desire for serving God, we are in danger of carrying out only the letter of the law as the Gospel Pharisees had done.

On the other hand, we are to make a

*continued on page 4*

# A Bouquet of Moments: Agape's Thirtieth Anniversary

by Molly Scott

*We are all one planet/ All one people of earth*

*All one planet/ sharing our living, our dying our birth,*

*And we won't stand by watching her die, hearing her cry,*

*and deny that we live as she lives, we die as she dies...*

When I wrote that song for the First Women's Pentagon Action in the 1980's I could not have imagined that I would be singing it forty years later in an open tent in the chill October rain beside a convicted murderer holding a four month old baby, two ordained Catholic priests—one of them a woman—the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, two new-old friends celebrating thirty years in that place, and a resolute host of others, wrapped in raincoats, blankets, and high beneficence, all swaying to the waltz rhythm of the song: *So many ways to divide us/ so many ways to build boundaries and walls/ systems we set up to hide us: / neighborhoods, nations, ignoring the call...*

We had heard the call—of the earth, the environment, each other—had not ignored it, and had gathered, between three and four hundred of us, to mark St Frances Day and celebrate this thirty year turning of the Agape community dedicated to social justice, a sense of sacred, and trust in the mysterious workings of love beyond name. Many had been coming faithfully, year after year, and some of the other presenters—Arun Gandhi, Billy Neal Moore, had been there several times before, but I had not. I had been invited to participate in "Francis Days" for many years, but I have a grandchild born around this time and I was often away in California. Not this year though. When the invitation came to sing for this thirtieth anniversary, my heart said a resounding "Yes!" "And now, blessed to come together to co-create with special resonant event—as though we were graced to pluck this nodal note in the great net of Indra, the web of the world, where every tiny movement reflects, and is reflected by, every other.

Planning the event together was so easy among us. I marvel at how Suzanne and Brayton intrinsically knew how music shapes and deepens the texture of an event, how it opens people's minds as well their hearts, creating a sacred space into which the teaching and telling of things can be most effectively synthesized and understood.

Back in the day when I was a movement singer at anti-war, anti-nuke, pro-peace and pro-people rallies, we had to educate people about why music was an important component of getting the message across. Why do sacred services traditionally use music to open, close and thread the parts together? It is not just entertainment, though there is that too, but a deep tuning and conditioning of the brain-mind. When we sing together, we breathe together. We literally in-spire each other! And we did that day, surely.

The observance started for me with my big Tibetan bowl- gong at 10(ish) in the morning followed with two evocational songs on the piano to hymn the heart of the Agape community: my friend Sarah Benson's setting of The Saint Frances Prayer: *Lord, make me an instrument/*



*of thy peace...and Richard Gillard's Servant Song: Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too. For me this was a gathering song. I could look out at the people coming together early in the day and sing: We are pilgrims on a journey; we are travelers on the road. We are here to help each other walk the mile and share the load...*

We had decided that the theme of the liturgy in the afternoon would be "Led by the Light" with the bestowing of stoles, "enshawling" participants as a ceremonial gesture, evoking the theme of the stoles bestowed on women priests.

A musical highlight developed when Arun Gandhi cited "Lead Kindly Light" as his grandfather's favorite Christian Hymn, so we decided to make this hymn a nodal part of liturgy. Unexpectedly—and quite magically—Arun arrived Friday night at Frances house while we were still setting up the sound system, and I had the singular honor of playing the traditional hymn while Arun, now his grandfather's age himself, spoke the words over the music with the ad hoc Friday group watching

and singing with him, swept in the high resonance of this historical moment. In the next day's event, before the collected crowd, Arun decided to sing rather than speak the whole song with me, and so we did this, the Mahatma, his "Bapu", shining through the last verse: *Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead thou me on...and with the morn those angel faces smile, which I have loved long since, and lost awhile...lead thou me on.*

Another bouquet moment came Jean Marchant, priest of her community Spirit of Life, Julianne Hartley, a recent college grad from Anna Maria, and I improvised a weave of music to Jean's reading of Mary Oliver's poem "When I Am Among the Trees", which ends: *The light flows from their branches. And you too have come into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled with light, and to shine.*

My song, "Jesus of the Color" was part of the weave of these moments. Written in 1970 when I was living in community in northwestern Massachusetts, it is a prayer with a repeating chorus that people sing: *Shine in me, Lord, Shine in me... Jesus of the colors, burn me into light/ Jesus of the Colors, rainbow in my night/ Free*

*me from the confines of my mind/ let me know the silence beneath thinking. Shine in me...*

And then, after deeply moving talks by Roy Bourgeois, Arun, Brayton, Suzanne Shanley, Billy Neal Moore, participation by a parcel of young people, including song and dance, the shawl ceremony, with Billy wrapping little four month old Olivia in his arms (as long ago as a condemned prisoner, he had wrapped Olivia's mother, Teresa Shanley, in his arms), the music moved us into each other and then out into the world again: *Think of the things we love; remember the ones we love; open our minds, our hearts and our hands, and trust when we don't understand... We are All One Planet.*

Sunday morning, the final nosegay was participating in the prayer circle in the chapel where, like a flower myself, I drank in the energy of the simple service, savoring the elegant brevity of the process. In the open invitation to speak, that I was silent felt right, perhaps because I had been so vocal the day before. But we sang the final spiritual together about opening our minds to freedom, the music opened me up to voice again, like a trumpet flower, and it felt right to share something that I had intended to sing the day before, but the time then had not been right. Now it was.

It was a song I had written after the bombing of Bagdad, for a benefit for Kathy Kelly's group Voices in the Wilderness, who had kept presence there in the city during those tragically misbegotten bombings by our government. The song came into me over the Atlantic Ocean on a night flight back from teaching in Germany where I had listened to stories of holocaust trauma and visited Dachau, one of the concentration camps. I constructed the song, "At the End of the Day", around a chorus, which I intended to be both a call to and a mode of contemplative presence practice. The verses, list the agonies that move us to action asking over and over, *What do we say at the end of the day?*

That morning as people sat in the small circle in the chapel of Frances House in the resonance of prayer and song it was the chorus of that song I wanted to share, for the end of the day, for the always-beginning of the day:

*Breathing in, I see you clearly  
Breathing out, I love you dearly,  
I am open to your presence  
And I do not turn away*

And so a new day began. A new opportunity to be the instruments we pray to be, to give voice to the truth that cannot stay silent: *Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace...*

*We are all One planet; All one people of earth...and we won't stand by, watching her die, hearing her cry, and deny we live as she lives, we die as she dies.*

*continued from page 3*

discipline out of doing good *despite a joyless heart*; the son who complains while helping work the field is more useful than the one who lovingly makes empty promises of help.

This seeming paradox unravels when the heart is connected to the head; each *conscious action* changes our *unconscious personality* that defines the options from which we may consciously choose. C.S. Lewis sees this back-and-forth as a journey to Heaven or Hell: "every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses...either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow-

creatures, and with itself." (*Mere Christianity*)

Without community there is no peace; that is, a lack of *conscious* effort to engage our neighbors will never produce a habitual, *unconscious* love for them. For that matter, I have never really met my neighbors. In a city like Boston, this situation is nothing out of the ordinary; we value the ends of unconscious tolerance but not the means to get there: conscious engagement through nonviolent conflict. Generalizing from Western attitudes towards fundamentalist Islam, Slavoj Žižek explains that "the other is welcomed insofar as its presence is not intrusive, insofar as it is not really the other. Tolerance thus coincides with its opposite... This is increasingly emerging as the central human right of advanced

capitalist society: the right not to be "harassed", that is, to be kept at a safe distance from others." (*Against Human Rights*)

Maybe part of the problem is that the purely rational social science, economics, has come to dominate and govern our affairs. Miguel de Unamuno saw the modern age as an imbalanced obsession with the conscious and rational, a society that scorned unconscious and emotional yearnings for God and immortality as childish. Though rationally convinced of his soul's mortality, he sought to live by his Catholic faith, "to wish that the soul may be immortal, but to wish it with such force that this volition shall trample reason under foot and pass beyond it." (*Tragic Sense of Life*)

People of reason justify war. People of faith are not interested in what is, however, but what should be. By living and working in a community such as the Creatively Maladjusted, I envelope myself in a culture where radical nonviolence becomes the unconsciously understood standard of living. This community creates a space where one can safely and consciously, effortfully practice the works of active peace. May such a community turn the center of each of us into a creature where love for neighbors is simply second nature, and where faith in lasting peace will trample the inevitability of war under foot to pass beyond it.

*Tim is an engineer and lives in an intentional community with other Creatively Maladjusteds*



## Saturday's Jeans

by Samantha Leuschner

At some point in our human existence we Americans determined our life's worth in terms of wealth, which includes fancy terms like assets, mutual funds, net income, and the number of garages one has attached to their house or mansion? In this capitalist society, if you have these things in abundance then you are, should be, happy – wealth, material stuff, equals happiness. Simple, right?

Along this yellow brick road of accumulating more wealth, and thus accumulating comfort, people have become out of touch with the greatest riches essential to life—riches that have sustained human existence for all of time, riches that are the core of human life – love, and all that follows with love. For all God has blessed us with we give thanks—our jobs, our harvest, and the roofs over our heads, but do we love such things above loving each other and loving ourselves? Is it not what lies within each of these things that is the greater blessing—our relationship with God?

A recent reading at Morning Prayer from the Gospel of Luke Chapter 12 reminded me that a fresh pair of jeans does not quite lead to the path of salvation. I was going to Boston to spread the good news to several graduate and Divinity schools of a post-college retreat at Agape and would wrap up my evangelizing at Stephanie's, a member of Agape's post-college group the Creatively Maladjusted, and have a potluck dinner, thus making this

## Interns and Volunteers



Samantha stacking Agape wood in the basement

a twenty-four hour endeavor. With that in mind I pulled out my suitcase, an overnight bag, mind you.

*"It was only one night, just one night" I muttered to myself remaining fixed on*

*the vacuous space of the overnight bag. While I gazed into that overnight bag, a sudden onslaught of thoughts crowded my mind and that overnight bag no longer seemed fitting. I do not need a pair of fresh*

*jeans...it's just one night...but what if it rains and my pants get wet? Or what if I lose the pair I am wearing?! Such concerns only provoked further ones. I'll bring my cell phone but let me bring my charger, it's better to be safe than sorry. What if I have some free time? I'll pack a book as well. Then of course I must bring an adequate number of socks—cold, bare feet are dangerous. Did I pack those fresh jeans for Saturday?"*

Back at Agape forty-eight hours later, at Morning Prayer, having just listened to the reading from Luke it dawned on me: Did I feel comforted by any of these "things"? Or was it the hospitality of a warm bed and a fulfilling dinner at the hands of generous and giving people the true security I was seeking?

Indeed Stephanie and her roommate Amanda extended their generosity and hospitality for my friend Maggie and me, which spoke the beautiful truth found in Luke's Gospel. Life's meaning is not discovered in superficial comforts; rather, life's meaning is alive in how we humble ourselves for other, in compassionate acts like having an open door to one's home.

Jesus' teaching reminds us that if we are to hunger for anything and to be rich with anything, that we are to hunger, to seek, and to be rich with love, an agape love that is selfless and seeks no return, no reward other than the joy of giving. Such love can bear much fruit.

*A recent graduate of University of Albany, Sam has shown her shining face and selfless love as an intern for four months.*

## I Will Return Again and Again

by Martin Legg

There are many reasons why I return again and again to the Agape Community. Even after my departure from the Catholic Church, the spiritual breadth present at this lay community and the space held to appreciate and cherish all life, continually invites and inspires the use of my time and energy. The opportunity to take part in the meaningful work, activism, and community life that exists at Agape brought me back to the woods and the Quabbin yet again, where I spent much of the past two months living in Francis House.

During this recent stay at Agape I was involved in the pre-production and planning of Francis Day, the exhale and unwinding after the annual peace event, and finally before my departure, was invited to stay and co-facilitate the Holy Cross College rural immersion retreat with Brayton, Suzanne, and Samantha (Agape's wonderful intern).

I now know that September is a very exciting and hectic time to reside with this community. Francis Day with its multitude of dynamic elements requires intensive preparation. But the day came and the tents went up, and the cars lined Greenwich Rd for a ¼ mile. Newcomers coming, life-long members returning, profound words shared from the key note speakers, tradition honored and transformed in a liturgy service recognizing all those who are "led by the light" and in resistance of the social violence of patriarchy and in solidarity honoring the divine light in all sex's, genders, and ages. Yes. All in all Francis Day was quite an event and it was a gift and a joy to be swept into the preparations, liturgy, and musical collaborations on October 6th 2012.

I am always amazed at the ability of physical work, quiet open spaces, and community life at Agape to enable a process of growth, introspection, and healing. This past

summer I experienced a rare and beautiful cultural exchange with children in Roxbury. I happened to be in the right place at the right time and was offered a job to share what I know of music and acting at a YMCA summer program. Memories of summer continue to kindle a fire within me in spite of the autumn chill.

I left Boston inspired by the children's laughter, creative energy, and the need, as well as their ability, to express themselves. Often they shared stories of violence from the streets around us. The violence and bullying that exist today in so many young people's lives, manifested inside the culture of the program.

I had talks and discussions in music and acting class about bullying and non-violence. The idea of non-violence as a force and what it does is something that this experience inspired me to want to explore. I brought these feelings with me to Agape and was able to process them internally and with the community.

Perhaps it is Christ's message of love and living compassion that so many peacemaking Christians are strengthened by, I feel that and I honor that too. Non-violent, unconditional love is God and it is all around us, as well as within. In yoga, non-violence is called ahimsa, which means kindness and non-harm to all living things including animals; it respects living beings as a unity, the belief that all living beings are connected. This interest and pursuit has brought me into a confluence of Eastern thought and Christianity, and resulted in this return to Agape, and in the coming months, a departure to study abroad and learn to teach yoga and martial arts. This community has continued to be a cornerstone of support and inspiration throughout my life and I will return again and again. Namaste. Peace, Peace, Peace

*Martin Legg received the only Agape Children's Peacemaker Award at age 9 when he turned in what he thought were his violent toys for peace toys at an Agape Advent evening. Martin and his brothers, mother and father are long-time members of the extended Agape community circle.*

## An Irishman's Summer

by James Murphy

I went to the US for almost twelve weeks last summer to work on the land, in a rural environment and to learn about organic gardening/farming, sustainable living. My first port of call was the Agape Community, a wonderful start to a great summer in the US. My Catholic faith is important to me, so I was also hoping that I could experience a faith community while also working on the land. Agape satisfied both of these hopes. I learned as much, if not more, about community living, as I did about sustainable living and organic practices.

As we drove back from the Worcester train station along Greenwich Road thick, lush forest all around us, gave me an indication of how close to nature we would be over the next several weeks. I received a warm welcome from the interns Monika & Samantha who had made a thoughtful poster for me and placed it on the front door of Francis House—"Fáilte ó chroí, James". It's Gaelic (Irish language) for 'heartfelt welcome.'

I was delighted to be a part of their 'work day' the day after I arrived. I was over my jetlag and able to get stuck in with the chores, gathering the heavy logs from the woodland surrounding Francis house and Brigid house and putting them into neat piles where they were stored for use in the winter. Fifty people helped out for the 'work day,' doing a wide variety of chores outside around the house to prepare for the winter in great spirit of cooperation.

Some weeded the vegetable garden, some did the scything of grass in the overgrown areas, and some picked the beautiful oregano. Many gathered the firewood and a few cut the wood into smaller, more portable pieces. I was impressed with

the large number of people who had turned up to volunteer their services for the day.

I loved the ritual of Morning Prayer at 7:30 each day in the wooden chapel: the scent of incense burning, lighted candles placed in front of religious icons, the sounds of the morning birds outside, the gentle gong of the singing bowl to signal the beginning of prayer. How wonderful it was to start the day in this sacred space, being present to one another, listening to and reading the Holy Scriptures of the day, being grateful for the blessings in our lives and making prayers of petition aloud and in silence.

Around 9 o'clock each night some of us would spend some time in silent meditation in the chapel with a few night lights glowing in the dark. Our meditation was enhanced by the beautiful and exotic sounds of nature, particularly those of the frogs calling out to one another across the pond. It was lovely to begin and end each day prayerfully as a community and to experience the presence of God in nature and in each other. While at Agape I learned to have a deeper appreciation for Sunday as Sabbath, a sacred day of rest.

Many meaningful and stimulating conversations took place over the course of the summer, in the car, the garden, on the porch, by the lakeside, and particularly over meals in the kitchen. They ranged from religion to politics to sustainable living and everything in between.

The Agape Community reaches out in Christian love to victims of violence and oppression (e.g. to their Iraqi friends), and they enable and encourage young adults, in particular, to be beacons of light in these challenging and changing times in which we live.

I planted many seeds in the garden in Agape and I helped to water them and care for them. In my time in Agape one or two seeds were planted within me in terms my own discernment and where the Holy Spirit is guiding me. For that, and so much more, I am very grateful to the Agape Community.

## The Simple Joys of Life: A Reflection on My Time at Agape

By Greg Joyce

As I began this immersion experience I had one simple goal for my time at Agape, to absorb everything we did with a positive and enthusiastic attitude. From the moment I arrived at the community, I knew that the time spent there would be enriching and enjoyable. I found myself eager to get to work and to take in everything Agape folk had to share with us. The eagerness to learn manifested itself in the form of gratitude, not only for the generosity of the community and my fellow "crusaders", but also for my parents and my mother in particular.

As we began our work in the garden, I was reminded of weekends spent in my own garden helping my mother to prepare for the coming season. I soon found myself overcome with emotions, an experience I did not expect. Throughout the rest of my time at Agape, I continued to reflect on the gratitude I felt for all that my parents had taught me and how those lessons truly helped prepare me for life on my own.

Although the lessons learned in the garden and the woods provided valuable lessons for the group, they were by no means the full extent of what Agape offered. As the group gathered for Morning Prayer, lunch, or dinner discussion and reflection accompanied, one of the most important takeaways from the group discussions involved understanding the importance of listening. Taking the time to listen to each other provides one of the essential cornerstones of community.

Through lively, but respectful, discussion the group covered a large array of topics, from the need for ROTC on Catholic College campuses, to the pros and cons of affirmative action. In every case the result rarely, if ever, ended with a consensus opinion, but rather that each question or topic

## Sowing Seeds



6 AM Yoga Class - Holy Cross Students

discussed opened the door to several more unexplored questions. There is a need for individuals who desire to experience the world in this manner, individuals who possess a passion for thinking, and doing so without fear. As we continued to share our opinions and grow in the new community we were fostering, the greatest apprehension I had when leaving the Agape community was how to take what I learned and apply it to everyday life.

The current state of mainstream American culture leaves one feeling uneasy about a number of issues: the economy, political divisiveness, violence in the Middle East, and so on. Thinking in a similar vein, college students constantly find themselves engaged in a constant effort to balance a full course load, social life, along with trying to monitor their own mental and physical well being. In all of these cases, one easily see the ideas of simplistic and conscientious living falling to the wayside as we find it

easier or more convenient to continue to live in way we have grown accustomed to.

Taking a moment to step back and observe the manner in which our culture operates, it is no surprise to read about increasing levels of illness and the proliferation of unhealthy life styles in our culture. Though the reality of our future may appear dim, we still possess the power to change the course of our future. It requires very real sacrifice and inward reflection, as I learned from my brief but valuable time at Agape.

Now that I have returned to my everyday life, a life filled with distractions, I find myself taking the time each day to quietly reflect on some of the basic tenants of my immersion experience. One of the most meaningful lessons I learned during my time at Agape involved the increased awareness of the benefits of a vegetarian diet. The many health benefits serve as a compelling justification for the diet.

As one begins to truly discover the gains to our communities, economies, and environment with vegetarian eating, for me a passion emerged to not only continue the diet, but also to help spread the message of change that our world so desperately needs. Thinking further about the need for change—I thought about becoming an individual who understands the need to advocate for the spread of nonviolence as an alternative mindset to the over stimulated and violent culture of the world today. To live a life dedicated to the practice of nonviolence is to live a life in the image of Jesus. It takes great strength to remain true to the cause of nonviolence in a world filled with irrational fear and deep seeded resentment. If one is open to living a life as Jesus taught us one will quickly find great rewards.

This brings me to the most significant principle in my life, one which was affirmed and strengthened by my time at Agape, that through unconditional love we can truly achieve the goal of a more unified society. Dedication to cause of love not only helps to remove strife in our lives, but also draws one closer into relationship with God. To love someone whole-heartedly, without expectation, opens us to the gifts that each person brings to our lives. God is at work in these moments, showing us the joy and fulfillment one achieves through a life lived in unity with God. Each day and every success become just a little sweeter and more rewarding.

Though my time at the Agape community was short, it was truly life-altering. Taking the time to reflect on the experiences I shared with my fellow students brings feelings of joy and appreciation to my mind for Agape for interns Sam and Martin, for their generosity, compassion, wisdom, and love. The community gives hope to those who worry or despair over the current state of our society. I cannot wait to take what I learned there and help guide the world to a better and brighter future.

*Greg came to Agape for a Rural Immersion with a group of hearty souls from Holy Cross*

## Witness

### What Was I Doing In Mali?

by Nathan Kleban

At first when trying to write about my Peace Corps experience in Mali, I attempted to tackle the question of progress. I compared societal progress with ecological succession, the "progress" that an ecosystem undergoes over time. I tried to convey the idea that things change over time, but that at the present time things are as they have to be. When we go in and try to change things, in an ecosystem or a society, the existing systems of relationships are so complicated that ultimately they are beyond our limited comprehension, though we think we do understand. There's the butterfly effect if, for example, when one removes one type of microorganism from the soil, there could be far reaching ramifications on the entire system. Tracing all of these changes to their source might be near impossible.

Change is change. It just is. If we can accept an ecosystem as it is, in its present state in this moment, can we do the same for human society? In a forest, we might be disgusted by the sight of a fox tearing apart a cuddly little bunny rabbit, but we can accept that this is but

a part of the system that contributes to the harmony of the whole. Isn't every piece necessary?

In society we introduce vaccines that reduce child mortality which can cause change. Increased strains on the environment supporting the greater



Jane Presler

population, increased violence over limited resources, and the rise of cities as people flee the villages for work and this effect on community life are a few results. It might help to have other

complementary changes like family planning education for a more sustainable for society as a whole. But still, the future is tough to predict. Would it not be easier to learn to accept what is going on right now, than to go through the cycles of want and desire in the quest for perfect health, the end of death? We can strive and strive, but where is that going to get us aside from being continuously unsatisfied with the present moment?

Behavior change then seems of great importance. Here we buy fast cars and big televisions and neglect to take of our bodies well through dietary choices and inadequate exercise. In Douro, the small village where I lived in Mali, men bought cell phones and motorcycles but fed their families millet every meal. Behavior change seen as human change, as societal change, led me to conclude that it might be best to accept ourselves as we are rather than endlessly striving.

After I first arrived in Douro my village partner, Nouhoum, and one of his wives (polygamy is the norm here), Yafa, had a daughter who they named Yaadigo. Holding Yaadigo when I visited, several

times she peed on me, perhaps out of fear. Many babies and children in the village were scared of me. I was a big white hairy monster. People would joke around by bringing infants and small children to me knowing that they would scream in terror, maybe never having seen a white person before. Other times children, and even adults, would pet my arm hair as a curiosity, as they didn't have any themselves. Eventually Yaadigo grew more comfortable around me. But about two months ago Yaadigo died.

If I had been there (I was evacuated last April because of a war and a coup d'état), despite concerns about overpopulation and its effect on communities and so on, I would have done whatever I could have done to help her to survive. I would've thrown money at the family to take her to the hospital in the market town. Another time one of Nouhoum's sons, Bara Segu, was severely sick and not knowing what to do, I gave the family money to give the child quinine shots, despite the dangers of the powerful drug and the question of whether its continued use assists malaria in continuing to be resistant to it. Fortunately he recovered. I'm not saying this because I want to come across as a great guy, but that I really wasn't sure what I was doing. Looking at the big picture, one can see the long term effects and speculate on what's "best." But on the ground it is different.

*Former intern, Nathan returns to Agape periodically, recently, with this moving story.*



*continued from page 1*

affliction of violence and offer succor to the involuntary poor in their desperate need.

Without voting for candidates to represent us, who decide for us and appear to do the "necessary" work of human governance and protection from rivals, many Christians dedicated to the gospel of peace still maintain there is no other way to contain cruel policies of the State. "If good people don't vote for good policies," the argument goes, "then we will leave the system to evil people that weaken our security and influence for good in the world." Many sincere people of good will vote, contending that they are siding with the lesser of evils, a battle ground where standing against the greater evil is a moral and practical necessity.

But isn't a lesser evil still evil? And is voting the only way to affect the general welfare of all our sisters and brothers? **Given the value system of current political parties, is voting the best method to foster**

**New Testament values in this world?** Or are there other, better, less compromised ways to effect social change, protect the poor and powerless and witness to Jesus, as a real sign of hope in the world?

If I choose not to vote, a serious question then remains: What will I do to fulfill my moral responsibility to push my "tribe" in a direction that is more truthful and aware of its wrong doing, become more nonviolent with governance while increasing our ability to sustain life on earth? Because it is impractical to wait for the majority of our society to begin the process of building a nonviolent society, we must initiate a leaven of self governance that is not merely a pragmatic political plan but a "witness" of small groups of faith inspired individuals resisting the self defeating injustices of the political and economic domination system.

In Revelations we have the image of Babylon, a remarkably workable metaphor for our first world empire status. The inspiration comes as a revelation to John.

"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great. She has become a dwelling place for demons. The merchants of the world have grown rich from the power of her luxury." (18; 2-3). The angel's voice of revelation continues to instruct John and by implication all of Christendom. "Come out of her, my people, so that you do not partake in her sins." (18:4) The first movement is clear and urgent: "come out." In the spirit of Divine love, first-world Christians need to withdraw their participation in the state's powers to oppress and crucify.

As privileged citizens we know that the luxury that weakens us spiritually needs protection militarily. Familiar with the abuses of Rome, the first Christians after Jesus, developed a way to relate to the sins of the modern State; they moved, responded to the call of "Come out" of the clutches of this fallen State and become a living sign of community of nonviolent love without trying to compete with, divide and conquer or overthrow the State and its decadence.

So the question isn't, how should we be governed? But rather, what order of self-governance is needed that does not come from the highest echelons of political power downward? Because human beings are communal and because living and working together require a common effort—just policy, economic order and skill at conflict resolution in the face of disagreement, we require some local form of governance. We need to learn to better govern ourselves in the midst of this fallen world. In so discerning we determine how and where to stand with a God who redeems us all.

Because Christians who follow the singular path of Jesus manifest a way of being in this world, a way of life must be lived, through a witness grounded in uncompromising communities of nonviolence. We must patiently trust that God will redeem our violence with our cooperation but in God's good time. In that sense, it is true that we humans always get the governance we deserve, settle for or make possible.

*continued from page 2*

spoken, very loving, and kind. He got his composure and said: "Look, God took care of Roy in Vietnam, brought him back home, and took care of him in Bolivia, El Salvador, in prison, and God's going to take care of him now." He gave me this big hug, and that's when my brother and two sisters hugged. All of a sudden my brother said: "I want you to give me that address of the Pope! He is going to hear from me!" What power to have blessing from one's family. The struggle

peace and justice is going to upset others, especially those we're closest to. A boulder lifted off my back. Since that day I felt peace.

We cannot carry anger, cannot allow our anger to dominate, like some of the anger I have had towards some of my fellow priests. I've got to learn to be more accepting, patient and kind in that struggle for peace, to hold on to joy and the hope. Faith sustains us in hard times. I am filled with hope. Many tried to stop these large movements—abolition, women's suffrage movement. I am sad to say that there were many in my Church,

church leaders, who tried to stop the right of women to vote. They failed.

Many in our country tried to stop the Civil Rights movement, and caused a lot of suffering to others, but they could not. They failed because those movements, as this movement of gender equality, are rooted in love and justice and equality. They are of God. They simply cannot be stopped. Before he was killed, Bishop Oscar Romero used to say, that in this struggle for peace and justice, equality and love, we all can do something, and do it well.

Agape, you have been doing it well for 30 years and so let us continue. We can all keep doing something and do it well.

*The title of Roy's talk at Agape is taken from his booklet of the same title which may be ordered through Roy Bourgeois M.M. PO Box 3330, Columbus, GA 31903 or read online at [www.roybourgeoisjourneys.org](http://www.roybourgeoisjourneys.org); copies of the movie, Pink Smoke Over the Vatican, an award winning production, may be ordered through [www.pinksmokeoverthevatican.com](http://www.pinksmokeoverthevatican.com)*

## Voices

**Question for Fr. Roy Bourgeois at Agape's 30<sup>th</sup> –Joe Miller, member, Creatively Maladjusted:**

"Fr. Roy, how are you able to navigate those waters? How do you find the spiritual strength to remain committed to the Church you have served for so long, all the while being questioned by not only the highest levels of the church, but by his some of your brothers in the Maryknoll order?"

**Fr. Roy:** "The church is a part of all of us, and we are all a part of it; and we're not leaving over a disagreement, but rather, honoring the primacy of conscience. Holding conscience as primary adheres to and celebrates the tradition of the church."

**Emily Jendzejec, a member of The Creatively Maladjusted responded to Fr. Roy's talk:**

Father Roy has been an inspirational figure in my life for the past ten years. I first remember learning about him when I was 19 years-old at my first School of the America's protest in Columbus, Georgia, amongst 10,000 people standing with the courage to say—Enough! Ya Basta! to the violence and injustice that the school had inflicted throughout Latin America.

Now here we were gathered under the tent at Agape with Father Roy speaking to us with vigor and compassion about how the vocational call to the priesthood can be present in anyone regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, or class.

His message is simple: We must support one another as we strive to live out the gospel message of nonviolence with our actions, our voices, and our prayers.

**Excerpt from an article by Naveh Halperin on Rabbi Sheila Weinberg's reflection offered at Agape to students from Brandeis University on Spiritual Identity:**

I tend to think of spiritual paths as all or nothing deals, where you have to choose between paths as if you were at a buffet. For example, many times I find myself comparing and contrasting Buddhism with Judaism or Christianity.

However, I am slowly realizing that everyone has his or her own unique path, and every single spiritual teaching has its fruits. To me the most important thing is having a spiritual identity: the ability to discover things on one's own, and to continuously challenge the existing identities that are put on you by society.

**Excerpt of a letter from a former Agape volunteer Gary Blanchard from a prison in Greenfield, MA,:**

I am sorry to inform you that you won't be hearing from me all too often. I have landed myself in jail. For 2½ years. At times, I wish I would get more mail coming in to me. I feel alone in here at times. It would be nice to hear from some friends every now and then. I hope everything is going good for you there. Hope to hear from you soon.

**You may write to Gary at: 160 Elm St. Greenfield, MA 01301**

**Excerpt from a Tribute to Mike True, peacemaker, author and friend, by Dave O'Brien, also peacemaker, author and friend, at a Benefit for the Center for Nonviolent Solutions:**

So Mike is a good citizen, one described by Dorothy Day as a person who "uses the Bill of Rights says what he believes to be true, and shares his thoughts with others. A good citizen takes part in democracy, doesn't leave it to others—some big shots—to speak for him, to act for him." Isn't that Mike True?

And finally Mike is a friend; indeed he has a genius for friendship. If he gets a chance to get up here today I know he will want to correct me by saying that the great work I have described was the work of many great people and it was his privilege simply to accompany a few of them, as it is to accompany all of you.

So, Worcester peacemakers, with me, literally with me, let us say thanks to Mike True. Please stand, raise a glass of water, and now repeat after

me: Thank You Mike True! All together: THANK YOU MIKE TRUE!

**Excerpt from a letter from Maria Termini, an Agape volunteer:**

I have just returned from a different world in the Bolivian countryside where the mountains are all different colors and the people are Quechua-speaking and live a hard life of subsistence farming. I walk long days up hill in extreme heat and at a high altitude. The views are worth it, and the chance to see how people live here. I thought about how wonderful it was to be at Agape and participate in its 30th anniversary celebration.

I got there a few days early and worked outside mainly in the garden right in front of Saint Francis House, moving rocks to clarify the edges, moving clumps of lilies and asters that were straying into the driveway, often with a drizzle but always with the rich colors of the changing leaves. In the afternoon, I thought I was finished for the day, when I had an opportunity to do sound for Molly Scott, one of my favorite singer-song-writer-performers. I learned a lot in hurry and feel inspired to continue working for justice and peace.

*Maria's gifted soprano voice echoed throughout Agape in the days before the Anniversary, bringing great joy to all.*

## News Notes



*Some Post College Retreatants*

**Nov. 2-4<sup>th</sup>, Agape** held its first annual grad school and post-college retreat. Spring retreat to follow. Stay tuned.

**Agape's Rural Immersion Experiences: Living an Integrated Life: Nonviolence and Sustainability.** In the past months, Agape has hosted Brandeis University, Iona College and Holy Cross College. Please call to reserve a place for your college or university for a two to four day experience. See website flier.

**Suzanne Belote Shanley** spent a day at Stonehill College in September, invited there by **Campus Minister, Maryanne Cappelleri**, for classroom teaching on Women and War: Reclaiming Our Nonviolent Heritage, as well as a well-attended evening seminar on gender and peace and justice.



**Rejoice!!!!** By **November 25, 2012**, Agape will have completed a seven year project of getting both Francis and Brigid Houses on Solar hot water and photovoltaics. We want to thank all of you who supported this effort and all of Agape's ministry and programs.

### SUPPORT SERVANT SONG

- ☐ Yes, I want to receive Servant Song twice yearly.  
 Enclosed is ☐ \$10 ☐ Other donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I can't subscribe, but please keep me on your mailing list.
- ☐ Enclosed is a donation of for the work of Agape.  
☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Please take me off your mailing list. (We urge you to please remove your name if you do not read Servant Song or other Agape mailings.)

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



*Omar and Donny on Francis Day*

Omar, Ali and their father, Sabah, are in need of ongoing donations as they continue to search for housing and sustain their lives after the injuries they suffered both physical and mental when their car was attacked by American soldiers at a checkpoint in Mosul, leading to the death of wife and mother, Suad. We are grateful for their presence in our lives at Agape, and hope that you will inquire about how you can help them financially. Our goal is a house or condo held in trust for them.

### Rest in Peace: Passing of Agape Friends

**We mourn the loss of Alice Barton**, dear friend, poet and novelist, beloved wife of Millard Cramp, and member of Cape Cod Pax Christi whose smile and indefatigable spirit will be greatly missed.

**Claudia Hunter**, long time Pax Christi member and dear friend to Agape, never missing a Francis Day, died suddenly last month. Presente Claudia for your stewardship of Pax Christi and Agape.

A **great light**, teacher and woman of peace, friend of Agape for over twenty-five years, and beloved mentor at Bethany Hill School, **Sr. Ellie Daniels CSJ**, leaves behind, her great nonviolent legacy.

**Brayton and Suzanne tour of NY before Sandy** included a trip to Iona College for classroom and seminar talks and to St. Joseph's College on Long Island, hosted by Campus Ministry in both schools, the trip now re-scheduled for the spring. **Please call Agape to schedule programs: Living an Integrated Life as well as Women and War. See website.**

**Nativity School 8<sup>th</sup> graders** harvesters in the Agape garden, ventured from Worcester to the woods of Agape for a day on nonviolence and sustainability.

**Jeanelle Wheeler**, life-time member of Agape, at age 16, has received the Annual Pax Christi youth award for her lively writing and active works for peace in numerous settings. Congratulations Jeanelle.

**Billy Neal Moore**, former death row inmate of 16 years and friend of Agape, is the lead actor in a movie on the death penalty, entitled, **Execution** which is being shown at nine select theaters in the U.S. For more information contact Agape's Facebook or website.

## AGAPE CALENDAR



**Dec. 1, 2012—7pm —ADVENT VIGIL**—Oh come, oh come to our vigil with bonfire, advent wreath, Oh antiphons and share community wisdom. No pot-luck, dessert welcome.

**Dec. 6, 2012—10 am-4 pm —Nativity School, Worcester.** 7<sup>th</sup> Graders from Worcester learn simple living and nonviolence.

**Feb. 9, 2013: 5:30 pm— St. Brigid's Feast Day** - Celtic Song, Poetry, Story, Prayer. Pot-Luck.