

# THE SERVANT SONG

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## “What Does It Take To Just Go For It?”

by Suzanne Belote Shanley

Over the past several years, we have rejoiced over the steady growth and progress of an Agape launched young adult community. The Creatively Maladjusteds, begun by post-grads consisting of former interns and volunteers, some of whom as undergrads had attended retreats on The Spirituality of Nonviolence, (sustainability and eco-theology). All involved have wondered how the nascent community would evolve. Evidence of its long-term viability emerged after many gatherings in which early members decided that intentionality and vision, a grand-plan, so to speak, was essential to prevent the process from becoming a discernment of personal goals for the future, (not a bad thing in itself) without a peace and justice or action component reflective of Agape's radical commitment to gospel nonviolence. Further, Agape as lay community, committed to tackling issues of a New Church amidst the erosion of the old, opened avenues of vibrancy for these young people yearning for renewal. Many in the original group coalesced around a sustainable model of community expression that included prayer, simplicity, community worship (paraliturgies) and dialogue on major faith issues, including women's ordination, and the problematic dictates of an all-male hierarchy.

Some of the core group members of what we now refer to as The Creatively Maladjusteds, attended an Agape undergrad retreat while in their senior year at BC, (2006) and learned shortly thereafter that Condoleezza Rice (then Secretary of State and "architect of the Iraq war") was invited to give the commencement address and to receive an honorary degree at Boston College. Bennett Comerford, Emily Jendzejec, Becky Perreault, all founding members of the CMA's, formed the nucleus of a handful of student dissenters who joined with over 200 BC faculty, including Agape's chaplain, David Gill SJ and Theology professor, Thomas Massaro SJ, who carried signs reading: "Not In My Name." In her cap and gown, Becky joined our vigil line outside the BC stadium, concealing a banner under her graduation robe which read: "Who Would Jesus Bomb?" Creative? Yep. Maladjusted? Yep. Becky earned the MLK sobriquet that day.

Geoff Gusoff, a STM grad at Boston College, and graduate of Brown University, who had attended Agape retreats since his freshman year at Brown, co-facilitated an early first meeting of the Maladjusted core group which resulted in deliberate and sometimes painful conclusions that concrete action steps were necessary to keep the geographically disparate group together. It was at this early meeting that Geoff introduced the MLK speech to the American Psychological Association ("There are certain things in our nation and in the world which I am proud to be maladjusted and which I hope all men of good-will will be maladjusted..."). Resonating with King's call to be "As

### Agape's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Greg King

Join Arun Gandhi, Grandson of the Mahatma

Roy Bourgeois, MM, S.O.A. Watch

Billy Neal Moore, Former Death Row Inmate

Molly Scott, Artist-Musician

Francis Day

October 6<sup>th</sup>, 10 am

maladjusted as Jesus of Nazareth who could say to the men and women of his day, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you. Pray for them that despitefully use you," those present decided on the name, the Creatively Maladjusteds, after reading and discussing King's full text.

Geographical distances for repeated trips to Agape proved daunting to Maryland, New York and DC core members, who began meeting on their own after several exhausting but necessary early trips to Central MA during the initial stages of formation. At one of these opening meetings, Edgar Hayes and Ann Rader, a married couple with two children, described founding their intentional community, Freedom Farm, in upstate NY, modeled after Agape's homesteading/education vision of lifestyle as faith in action.

The developing CMA's spirituality included a desire to plan and share rituals with

community members surfaced as the desire to be "maladjusted" to the status quo, and the need to take bold action steps. One such initial step emerged as the organization and facilitation of a 2012 Spring retreat at Agape, introducing new people to the homestead and deepening bonds that had already begun among those who had attended bi-monthly pot-lucks. An exciting experiment was born—the first ever graduate student retreat at Agape structured by members of the core group, including food prep, registration, and hospitality, as well as leadership in prayer, talks, the results of which marked a milestone in Agape's education ministry.

**Be Not Conformed to this World:  
Creatively Maladjusted Retreat  
March 30-April 1, 2012**

One of the retreat participants, John Crawford Gallagher, a paralegal working on a Masters in Public Policy, also a coordinator with Agape of the Occupy Protest Chaplains for the first "moving" Good Friday Stations of the Cross undeniably captured everyone's deepest longings with a heartfelt admission of frustration with just "thinking" about transformed nonconformity, the provocative concept floated in the early hours of the retreat. "Sometimes I wonder," John intoned with no little exasperation in his voice, "Why can't I just go for it!" This self-scrutiny over inertia or the plain realities of their stage in life, became a resounding, oft-repeated and passionate cry throughout the retreat, whether participants were referring to Civil Disobedience, more radical departures in one's routine, or becoming a truly transformed maladjusted, the transformation being a spiritual process that involves deep interior work and change.

Brayton offered insights on alienation, which he defined as one of the "oldest and most universal experiences" of the human condition, prompting some in the group to share that they live in an "uber-connected" world that makes them instant "un" strangers, differing from concept of "alien" or "stranger" in earlier eras. Yet, despite such social networking, several of the group's Catholics, once again expressed estrangement from "church" as they had experienced it in their youth. "This disconnect", said one of the women, is indicative of "the stagnancy of the church as I see it now." Many friends nodded in agreement also expressing gratitude for the counterpoint intimacy of their current circle.

The burden and prison of college loans, stifling career goals unfolded into comments about frustration with the apparent slowness in uniting disparate elements of one's life, and the need to at times to "Just go for it!" One person spoke of journeying into "being more conscious of jumping out of the college box and into the social justice movement." Several people nodded in agreement with the repeated

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# Building the Circle

by Brayton Shanley

As we at Agape observe the twelfth year since the construction of our straw bale house, Brigid House, we remain in the allure of building something that inspires us to live in harmony with the earth around us. For all modern history, most humans have lived in a domicile of some kind, but in so doing, questions remain: What kind of house? Built with what inspiration? Does the house we live in encourage us to live sustainably?

Our culture continues to live in and through this Green Revolution, and we are reminded that today, more than ever, we are presented with a choice—we either progress toward a sustainable and simpler way of living or hand future generations an unlivable planet. Agape joins with others holding the same desire for a healthy, peace-filled existence that places us in deep accord not only among humans but also within the embrace of *all* life. Inspired by that vision, we at Agape have endeavored to reject the notion of the triumph of technology over nature, and to return to a more elemental pattern of wholesome, non-injurious way of being. To learn the art and science of sustainable living one must take the primary cue from nature herself, to mimic her ways (she never rushes nor hoards), to live and flourish within her sacred and regenerative circle. The more hearty this ecological circle, the more minimal the waste byproducts that poison the environment.

We also live and build as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christians. Sallie McFague writes in *Super Natural Christians*: “Christianity had better get on the environmental bandwagon because commitment to the God of Jesus Christ demands it. Christian nature spirituality is the logical next step from a tribal God toward a universal God, away from a God concerned with me and my kind toward the One concerned with the entire creation.”

Our way of life needs this “design”. How we want to exist in this world must have a plan, a trajectory, a sacred canopy that permits life-enhancing patterns and discourages life-denying patterns. To design from the conviction to live out of environmentally sustainable methods in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can have a deep effect on the way a community such as Agape conceives and builds a house.

## The First Circle - Building with Straw

After the delivery of 300 straw bales to our homestead, to build a 2,500 square foot, three bedroom straw bale house, the children and the animals excitedly and immediately made a home in them. Saturated with the smell of earth and field, the “wheaty” aroma of our bales translates—life. Children, with their own deep trust in where they love to play, spontaneously appropriated our bales as a golden castle and nested in it with their pets. Within weeks the stacks of bales became the actual walls of the house, the very image and wonder of earth connection and balance.

This healthy balance is maintained in nature when all that grows lives within a regenerative circle. Straw cut from grain is a yearly renewable resource, with no need to clear-cut forests to build with wood; instead of burning the straw as waste, we can build sturdy walls with it. Our national grain yield produces over 200 million tons of straw each year, from wheat, barley, oats, rice, rye, and flax, enough straw to build five million, 2000 square foot homes each year at half the cost of conventional building.

To live within the sacred loop that “sustains” we must always ask: “How much

energy, especially heating and cooling with oil and gas, will the building require each year?” Even in the world of green building, straw bale rates first in energy conservation. At R-50, straw has twice the heat energy conservation rating of the most current conventionally built super-insulated homes. Infusing our senses with the aroma of “the farm,” the builders regretted the thought of having to cover the beauty and smell of straw with earthen plaster to finish the inside walls.

To complete the framing of the house, we selectively cut oak and maple trees from Agape’s 34 acres and hired a logger to drag the logs in with two Clydesdale horses, quietly, without burning fossil fuels. The logs were immediately milled on sight for the posts and beams, and the resulting boards were used for flooring. Another circle is maintained. For centuries our native traditions teach us to use reverentially all of the plant or animal we kill, without exploitation or waste and to return to the natural world more than we take as we protect the “circle.”

It is difficult to list even one unpleasant factor in building with straw, except perhaps the ongoing, tirelessly awful “Three Pigs” jokes. But what a straw building does for the imagination is magical as much as mystical. When explaining straw bale construction to a newcomer, we can almost hear the wheels of the skeptic’s mind turning toward—“convinced!”

## The Circle Extends — Flushing Without Water?

The major loop we live within at Agape originates with the phototropic power of the sun, fueling the growth of the trees, our primary lifestyle resource for heat energy and building which culminates with ash from our woodstove. When the ash fertilizes the soil of the food supply we eat, the circle widens with the question: How do we dispose of human waste?

The answer: we built a compost toilet to collect and utilize human waste. When we mimic the rhythms of nature, zero waste results: the waste of one set of creatures can be food, fertilizer or habitat for another. The compost toilet applies and integrates lessons learned from nature, refuse from what we consume as humans is not discarded as waste and simply considered useless but rather, our composted “waste” becomes a resource to be managed and utilized within a regenerative cycle that fertilizes our growing soil.

As long as toilet water goes down, out and away, who needs to care about the rest? “Out of mind” systems tend to be environmentally costly. Do we know that 40% of all residential drinking water is consumed by flush toilets? To what end? Most septic systems have the potential to pollute ground water. Full of toxic chemicals, septic and sewer systems are the primary threat to North America’s most polluted bio systems; our lakes and rivers. This fact points directly to the myriad reasons for a compost toilet:

1. If built correctly it will never pollute groundwater.
2. It conserves our gradually disappearing drinking water.
3. The site built compost privy’s low tech ingenuity minimizes specialized maintenance and energy consumption and costs about one tenth of the average flush toilet system to build and maintain.
4. This waste disposal system recycles waste with a decomposition process much like what happens naturally with leaves dying into the forest floor. And anything that “recycles” continues life in a

circle of renewal not relegating it to the pollution-soaked, dead end “dump.” 5. Finally, and most miraculously, after seven years of composting, the fertilized “waste” provides nutrients for our fruit trees and flower gardens, and does so without pollutants or significant greenhouse gases. The circle is completed. Compost toilets—they’re the way to “go!”

## Sol – Originates the Circle of Life

The average house is ablaze with a million lights. Each lamp looks innocent enough, but Steve Kurkoski, our solar energy contractor, shared with us the uneasy fact that “every time we plug in a lamp and light the bulb, we trash the earth.” Why? To drive grid electricity, carbon spewing oil, propane, and coal must, in part, be burned to fuel generators. Of all building issues, non-sustainable energy use most indicts our first world habits of living. There is a Saudi saying: “My father rode a camel. I drive a car. My son flies a jet airplane. His son will drive a camel.” These so called “primitive ways” will become more necessary and sooner than we think.

As Agape considers it’s five year plan of weaning ourselves off all fossil fuels we ask ourselves questions like: How many lights do we need, 2, 10, 50? How many watts per bulb are needed to see in the dark, 10, 50, 100? How many gadgets? a DVD player? A computer in every room? Phones ringing everywhere? How do we pump a running water system that is “green” from a well? And how will we heat water and refrigerate food? All these “conveniences” require fossil fuel and grid-driven electricity and year after year make the American lifestyle an all consuming, financially expensive, carbon spewing, Wal-Mart purchased, un-recycled garbage dump waiting to happen.

As we look to our immediate future, we need to ask urgent lifestyle questions: **Do we need to return to the distant past and do everything by hand Amish style—with the primary energy source being sweat, muscle, building skill and patience and ingenuity alone?** Or, can we supplement the Amish simple, wholesome, hand-hewn and necessary example with something more modern? At Agape, we attempted the later by installing a solar driven energy system. Living off the sun is a nontoxic energy source that also allows us to live more as “phototropic,” sun-requiring beings, with a biological need for sun light. Add to this the fact that without the sun’s heat and light there is no life.

To run lights and fans sparingly and pump water up from a well gives us an abundance of untapped low carbon energy from the all powering “solar.” We harness energy of stored sunlight in batteries monitored by a voltage regulator that warns of waning energy capacity. Because stored sunlight is not limitless electrical energy, conservation becomes the fundamental discipline of the solar energy user. If we listen and watch, the earth’s bio systems, like wind and sun, communicate to us their limitations and the need for our self regulating conservation. Photovoltaic energy provides sunlight energy only as God’s precious gift, unlike the illusion of what our conventional electrical outlet seems to provide—plug it in and there appears to be limitless energy which, again, trashes the earth. So where is the incentive to cut back on energy consumption? We live with the false

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# Tony Flaherty: Voice for Peace in South Boston

*"They did not want the word Peace associated with the word Veteran." Tony Flaherty*

*The voice of one of the organizers of alternative St. Patrick's Day Peace Parade in Boston, Tony Flaherty, an 80 year old veteran and resident of South Boston, is a consistent and passionate one for gospel nonviolence, (though he bluntly acknowledges that he learned nothing of the nonviolent Jesus in his Irish-Catholic upbringing) and for recognition of veterans who have taken the narrow road of peacemakers.*

*Agape joined this year's Peace Parade, to support VFP, Smedley Butler Brigade, of which Tony is a member, as is long-time Agape Mission Council Member, Alden Poole who, at age 87, attended the parade in a wheelchair. (see picture on back page). This year, 2,000 people marched in the parade, with multiple bands, a Duck Boat, the Ragging Grannies singing from the top of the boat, a trolley for older folks not able to walk, multiple street bands, a large religious division, a large labor division and "Occupy Everywhere" division, including Occupy Boston and numerous other Occupy groups.*

*Excerpts of Tony's letter to the "Commander and Chief" Barack Obama:*

Despite numerous appeals to Government, State, and City officials, veterans are barred from participating in the parade by the non-chartered Allied War Veterans who deem the word "Peace" inappropriate when associated with "Veteran".

In 2003, protesting the illegal/immoral attack on Iraq, Veterans for Peace marched with permission of the Boston Police who were then sued by the Allied War Veterans resulting in a ruling on a par with that declaring "Corporations" are tantamount to people entitled to free speech. I testified on behalf of the police as a Veteran for Peace where I explained "carpet-bombing" and its effect upon thousands of innocent women and children suffering "Shock and Awe." None of the Allied War Veterans, so willing to send young men to die in unnecessary wars, possessed the ability to do so, which speaks volumes as to the credibility of the organization to which political representatives grant license to dictate community norms.

Since 2001, Veterans for Peace have been repeatedly barred from participation. At one celebration a Bronze Star Veteran accompanied the Mother of a woman serving in Iraq. She asked permission to address the audience with a plea to bring the troops home. These petitioners were manhandled from the hall. Interestingly in 2006, the community of South Boston voted 60/40 to bring the troops home, to no effect.

I am a native of South Boston, wherein "Peace is a dirty word" and where an excess of a million spectators observe a showcase of militarism wherein brigades of High School JROTC youth, in the main children of color, are presented to the applause of whites, quite comfortable their children will not be groomed as cannon fodder for wars profiting the 1%. Hundreds of police are required to keep the peace at costs in excess of \$300,000, while drunks in the doorways sing "Waltzing Matilda," a dirge to the death of troops and politicians take advantage of the photo-op marching to the tunes of "O Danny Boy" and "It's a great Day for the Irish," – if you are white and connected that is.

This spectacle is a disgrace not only to South Boston which has suffered more lives lost through illegal/immoral war than most



communities - indeed it is a feeding ground for the U. S. Marine Corps - but to the nation itself which espouses, in this and so many other endeavors, a hypocritical devotion to "Freedom and Democracy."

**We read with admiration and outrage Tony's email "count downs" of the days leading up to the parade, including incisive, scathingly brilliant letters to local politicians, The Boston Globe, Cardinal O'Malley of Boston and other press and dignitaries Eloquent, literary, this life-time "Southie" resident took his town to task in a totally rough-hewn, compelling original style which we attempt to capture here in his autobiographical reflections Tony shared with Agape.**

## Tony Flaherty: A Conversion Story

I enlisted in the Navy in 1949. As today, the recruiting station was very attractive. I joined the Marine Corps, but Father would not sign papers, having been in the South Pacific during the war. While he was in the South Pacific, waiting for him to come home, I shined shoes at South Station where all the trains with the troops came and went, which brings tears to my eyes even today when I think about the lonely kid with a shoe shine box, and a dirty sailor's hat his father gave him when departing. An angry, probable alcoholic, a gang leader, and a fan of every war movie ever made, at the ripe age of 16-thrilled with the prospect of heroism, and even dying for my country, I was affected my whole life by the absence of the father, and the attendant poverty.

There was never a truer sentence about the Irish - "All their wars were merry, all their songs were sad." It was glorious to be Irish, the true warrior, with the drumbeat of the music from "The fighting 69th," beating in your head. All the war heroes, it seemed to me were Irish, too true, as immigrants were the first to be drafted, like my Father who was 37 at the time, and my uncle with five kids, while all the other white fathers stayed home for the most part if they had kids.

If you were Irish, you were born tough, and we had Chaplains to bless us at every level of command. I got in trouble in

Vietnam when I asked one of them: "Just what rank do you think Christ would aspire to?" Actually being Catholic was considered an asset in the military as we were subjected to less scrutiny for security clearances, the FBI consisting in the main of Irish Catholic School graduates. Catholics were not Commies.

Ultimately achieving some sense of identity, I was well conditioned to fight for God and Country and protect my Mother and sisters from invaders coming over the walls of Castle Island, the same as many children today who live in a project, shooting and killing all day long on the internet games.

I rose through the ranks through Senior Chief Petty Officer as a young sailor and wannabe John Wayne or Ronald Reagan, neither of whom left the movie lot, and I was thrilled at the possibility of combat and killing the demonized enemy of the year. I was never taught that war was immoral certainly—rather somehow it was blessed.

If I had an epiphany it was in Vietnam. It was at a time when I was marching north and many Vietnamese were marching south, escaping local combat activities. I saw a young girl, about 13 maybe, who had on a very white *Ao Dai* and was carrying a child, and had on each side, another small child clinging, one with a bandaged arm. The thought entered my head, as plain as it does today: "Jesus Christ. I've got five children of my own. What the hell is going on?" Ultimately med-evaced and suffered a variety of personal losses, career, family I am only just recently able to embrace the idea of PTSD.

Retired now after 25 years of being "a racketeer for capitalism", as Gen. Smedley Butler, USMC, put it, I recovered somewhat, initiated programs addressing substance abuse, and in the 80's joined Veterans for Peace at the Washington Monument in the fast against our crimes in Central America.

I knew nothing of non-violence, and very little today. My life was violence initially through the oppression of poverty, and then the military and indeed societal conditioning. In the late 70's, my sister Katie, who had left the convent, took me to a seminar run by Father McCarthy on peace, made up of people about whom I sneeringly

reflected "Cripes they would hug a tree." At the ending assembly, several aspersions were cast upon the military. I blurted out very loudly "Shit, I saw more love next to foxholes than the baloney I am witnessing here." Tepidly, half-heartedly, I began to move into the idea of peace being propagated by such as Martin Luther King.

I constantly beg an answer from my sister, or indeed anyone: "Just who is Jesus? I don't get him." Now, strangely when I am marching, demonstrating, or barking at the moon, the only question that keeps me in what might be termed an island of sanity is "What would Jesus do?"

**Excerpts from Tony's Email Count Downs to the Peace Parade**

## Background of Exclusion from Parade

In March 2003, thirteen Veterans for Peace were, of course, ignored and consequently "peace activists" of any sort are barred from what is touted as a "family" event in a community where job opportunities are only available through a recruiting station. Nine years later, the game is the same, militarism is virtue, and VFP is relegated to march one mile behind the regular parade, which no matter how one cuts it is an insult to many veterans who suffered the experience and consequences of combat. Identical credentials of the Allied War Veterans would prove dubious at best, and if truth be told they are naught but a convenient foil for local politicians who continue to support illegal/immoral wars, and de facto constitute the Allied War Veterans.

Why is there no press coverage of the discrimination against Veterans for Peace, barred from the St. Patrick's Day Parade in South Boston and forced to conduct their own parade obstructed by street-sweepers? Notwithstanding the forced comedic political rhetoric at the Convention Center Breakfast, this insult to an organization of 5,000 veterans, many of whom are combat decorated, is allowed by the political establishment who claim to be sympathetic, but are powerless to intervene.

Worse, Veterans of Peace efforts have been blacked out by the media. Why? Can it be it could be embarrassing to the business community, whose advertising the Globe enjoys, were it evident that in the City of Boston, the word "Peace" associated with Veterans is a "dirty Word," and the real "Old Boy" network intent upon suppressing representative government or change is still in force in South Boston and still a cancer to the entire community, indeed the State. Sadly, perhaps nothing will change until we are able to flash around the world pictures of 5,000 marching participants made up to look like Jesus Christ carrying an AK-47.

## Tony's Advice "As Your Gentle Spirit Passes on Parade"

As your gentle spirit passes on parade, please be conscious that in some doorway you can be assured that a Veteran of the Iraq/Afghanistan is watching - homeless and jobless. This was my state of affairs in the early 70's after having been medically evacuated from Vietnam and released from the hospital in one day upon my return because we were an embarrassment, or the establishment did not know what the hell to do with us. Seeking a job or housing was an eye-opener, resorting then to a politician or local "concerned" veteran organization invariably led to the response: "Gee, I would like to help, but things are different now."

You will be a living witness that someone cares, and trust me that in the mystery of things that is the single proof necessary to overcome the soul-searing cynicism resulting from exposure to war and violence and consequent recovery for admittedly too few.

## Gandhi Visits “Occupy”

by George Pattery SJ  
(Homily at Agape’s Annual Advent  
Evening)

Let us suppose that Gandhi walks into an Occupy gathering. He would directly go in and sit in deep silent prayer. In deep silence he would listen to the *still small voice within*. That would turn the entire crowd of people of different faiths/ no faiths into deep silence; may be into prayer. That would not be a pretense; it would be deep listening within. As Gandhi said once: “I know I fail often, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously ... I am painfully aware of my failings ... but the Light within me is steady and clear.... there is no escape for any of us save through truth and non-violence.”

He would then inquire from the people about “their anxiety and protests”. They would say: “Politicians failed us; financial systems exploited us; we need change.” He would agree with them broadly and would tell them: “A person is not necessarily happy because he is rich or unhappy because he is poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy; the poor seem to be happy. ... Our real happiness and health consisted in a proper use of our hands and feet ... for our bread labor. ... If we become free, (India) the country is free. ... It is Swaraj (self-rule) when we learn to rule ourselves.” He would thus question the basic assumption of today’s economy and politics – of a political economy that feeds on never ending consumption and greed.

Having presented this goal of real Swaraj (self-rule), Gandhi might interrogate them on their demands and goals. A practical strategist, he would insist on their adopting goals, defining their strategy, and communicating these to their opponents/authority and the broader public. These would have to be accepted by all involved in the struggle Occupy, under an oath in the true spirit of “religious commitment”. They should be ready to suffer for it and die for it. “Not promising what you cannot be sure of delivering is as much an axiom of non-violent strategy as it

## Sowing Seeds



is of democratic power.” (Ackerman and Duvall, in *A Force more powerful*, p. 468).

All along he would insist never to harbor any sense of hatred or violence against anyone. Rather he would insist on a fast, either to remove from within any feelings of hatred or violence or to bring the attention of authorities to the demands. Once the demands/goals/strategies have been articulated, consented to by all and presented to a specific authority for response within a specific time, Gandhi would undertake positive political action and constructive program

Thus, the most pressing question facing the Occupy activists and all of us is how to articulate the longings of the 99%, how to bring about a confluence of ideas and how to craft a unity that respects and celebrates the immense differences among the 99%, and between the 99% and 1%? How can we learn how to come together? This is something all of us have to search for. How can we come together in a unity that is not simplistic, oppressive or exclusive, but complex, emancipatory and inclusive, recognizing, in June Jordan’s words “we are the ones we have been waiting for”.

The spirit of Jesus invites us to give name to this new coming together of peoples across the globe, to give form to the aspirations and anxieties of peoples and to shape new hope for the humanity. It is a defining moment for us. Where do we find the spirit of Jesus in this conversation? Perhaps Tagore gives us a perspective in answer.

“Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest, and lowliest and lost. When I try to bow to thee, my obeisance cannot reach down to the depth where thy feet rest among the poorest, and lowliest and lost. Pride can never approach to where thou walkest in the clothes of the humble among the poorest, and lowliest and lost. My heart can never find its way to where thou keepest company with the companionless among the poorest, the lowliest and the lost.” (Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali* 10).

*George Pattery, SJ, from Calcutta (Kolkata), served as provincial of its Jesuit Province from 2005-2011 and spent the Fall Semester 2011 at Holy Cross College, Worcester.*

## What Does It Mean To Be a Catholic University?

By Joe Miller

What does it mean to be a Catholic university? This question has been posed for decades; particularly since the Second Vatican Council. In recent years, the question of mission and identity at Catholic universities has come into sharp focus through controversial events, perhaps the most well-known was President Barack Obama’s 2009 Commencement address at the University of Notre Dame; which some argued was an inappropriate forum and invitation for a president who supports abortion rights.

So often debates about Catholic identity focus on abortion, the presence of non-Catholic/non-Christian groups and worship spaces on campus, and whether the university-procured student health insurance plan covers birth control. Given the presence of ROTC on so many Catholic campuses across the country, the absence of ROTC from this “litmus test” list of issues for Catholicity is curious, to say the least. College of the Holy Cross professor Ward Thomas writes in favor of ROTC at Catholic schools; however, from my vantage point as a theologian, a product of the University of St. Thomas and Boston College, as well as a Junior (high school) ROTC program graduate, the presence of ROTC at Catholic institutions is at least problematic, if not outright contrary to the Christian tradition.

Professor Thomas argues that armed defense of the state may often be necessary, permitted, and sometimes even viewed as moral by the Catholic tradition. He re-states a good observation made by the US Catholic Bishops

in their 1983 pastoral letter on peace, that states that there exists a “tension between the vision of the reign of God and its concrete realization in history.” In other words, “Blessed Are the Peacemakers” is an excellent ideal to live by, but can it be universally applied in all times?

The Gospel command to love enemies and Jesus’ clear preference for nonviolence in dealing with adversaries is an ideal desperately needed in today’s war-torn world. But what happens when a nation is directly attacked? Is it appropriate—or even just—for a single person, or authoritative body to effectively speak on behalf of an entire society by opting not to prevent further attack by means of armed defense? Philosophically, Catholic tradition would engage this debate using Just War Theory. But still we must ask “What would Jesus do?” Thus, to what extent is it moral for a Catholic institution to engage in support (even qualified or tacit) for armed force?

Professor Thomas notes that in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II’s apostolic constitution on Catholic universities, the former Pope notes that Catholic universities are “immersed in human society” and not standing apart from it, always critiquing that society. Thomas cites this passage in the context of arguing that critics of ROTC take too narrow an interpretation of the US Bishops’ 1983 letter call for Catholic colleges and universities to teach the ways of peace. He seems to suggest that by their immersion in society, Catholic universities have something particular to contribute to specific departments as a Catholic institution. In other words, can an ROTC program at a Catholic institution be a “more moral” ROTC program than one at a secular school?

In this light, I am reminded of a letter exchange between Fr. Daniel Berrigan, SJ, and

the then-president of Loyola University (New Orleans), Fr. James Carter, SJ. Dan wrote to Fr. Carter that while he enjoyed teaching at Loyola in fall 1989 (coincidentally the same semester the Jesuits & laywomen were killed in El Salvador), he would not return because he could not in good conscience appear to condone the university’s sponsorship of ROTC. Fr. Carter wrote back saying that all things considered, “given the reality of the military, it is better to have officers who have the benefit of a Jesuit education.”

How does Dan respond? With classic Berrigan prophecy: “I love your logic. It seems to me that, given the reality of abortion, Loyola should sponsor an institute for abortionists, and given the reality of capital punishment, you should sponsor an institute for executioners!” (cf. John Dear, *Apostle of Peace*, 179.) Certainly, we know that such a forum for abortionists would not pass the idea phase; and it shouldn’t. But why, then, does ROTC get a seemingly “free pass” to continue with a mission so obviously opposed to the Gospel command to love one’s enemies?

If the US had a truly *defensive* military, I’d be able to see Fr. Carter’s point. Perhaps a military could, in principle, be a *part* of “build[ing] peace within and among nations” and could contribute to “the stability and security of a just order.” (US Catholic Bishops in Thomas, p. 227) However, given the role the United States government has played in numerous countries—a coup in Guatemala, US troops as armed ground “support” in Panama during unrest created by an unjust presidential election in which the CIA funded one of the candidate’s campaigns—the level to which the US military has contributed to a just order is clearly questionable. And for a military-focused example of the “beneficial” line of logic... let’s

consider the US-sponsored training of Salvadoran troops to “democratize” their armed forces: since when has the Christian call for “just order” included the murder of an Archbishop, more than a dozen priests, three US nuns and a lay missionary, and tens of thousands of peasants?

Supposedly Latin American soldiers are, and were, taught ethics at the US Army School of the Americas/WHINSEC. Whatever proof there might be for such training, history says we need to ask what impact that training actually has on students. This is to say nothing of the current war in Iraq, which former Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz admitted was planned days after September 11, 2001. (Ume Reader, August 2003) Given these examples alone, one could fairly conclude that the US military is addicted to war, and thus too often an obstacle to “the stability and security of a just order,” rather than a guarantor of it. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1909) Given this flagrant opposition to the Catholic tradition (not to mention the Gospels), a Catholic institution ought to question the supposed value of hosting an ROTC program on campus.

It is my hope that this article be a way of asking why it is that debates around Catholic identity overlook issues – such as war – that so clearly affect the common good. How is it that a speech by a president who happens to be pro-choice could touch off national protest; while the ROTC commissioning ceremony at the same school goes untouched? Until the debate around Catholic identity stretches beyond the realm of bio-medical ethics and gay marriage – important as they may be – that debate will likely hold no credibility among most Catholics, and thus remain a largely moot point.

*Joe Miller is a founding member of The Creatively Maladjusteds and a campus Minister at Stonehill College, Easton, MA*

## Canticles of Silence

*A day alone. A day without kids, husband, job. A day without a to-do list. A day without guilt that I should be moving in five directions at once. A day with God. A day with nature. A day with quiet.*

by Janessa Landeck

I didn't know what to expect as a set off on my day of retreat. My inclination was to make a plan, set some objectives, but I knew that wasn't the point. I hadn't carved out this time in my life to read a particular book or spend x-amount of time in formal prayer. I came just to live one day and be consciously open to hearing from God in that day.

I want to hear from God every day, to hear God's promptings, promises, guidance, but I so easily let God be drowned out. God speaks, but I rush



through making dinner and getting the house picked up. God's presence shouts from the tree in my backyard, but I yell at my four-year-old to hurry up and get his shoes on. God whispers while I waste time on the computer at the end of the day. What would my life look like if I learned to listen for God's voice as intently in my normal life?

My day of retreat was like putting training wheels on the bike as we did for my little one today. It was easier to hear God in the quiet. My day of retreat was practicing when the noise of my life had gone away. It was a day of sharpening my ears to hear that still, small but powerful voice of love and leading. It was a taste, a tease; it left me wanting more. "Lord, help me desire you more!" And God says taste and see that I am good and the desire will come.

Thank you Agape for helping me partake of the goodness of God. I pray I remember how good He truly is and learn more and more to hear him in each day.

## Witness

### Ordained Women Journey to Rome

by Pat McSweeney and Bob Heineman

Many of us admire Maryknoller Roy Bourgeois because he speaks truth to political power, at the School of the Americas protests he has organized at Fort Benning in Georgia for more than two decades. Now, Roy's courage and integrity have compelled him to speak truth, gently but firmly, to ecclesiastical power regarding the ordination of women. And most of us have read about the tensions his public statements have caused with some (not all) members of Maryknoll.

In October, 2011, Roy led a group of seventeen, which included two women priests and one woman deacon, to Rome in order to deliver to the Vatican 15,000 signatures on a statement honoring the right of individuals to follow their conscience on this matter. The journey was organized by WOC (Women's Ordination Conference) and CTA (Call to Action). On a mild Sunday evening, the group met for the first time on the roof of a small, charming hotel where, amusingly, we were able to look down on the Vatican dome, barely a whisper away. It seemed an auspicious beginning to our quixotic adventure. The group of strangers (all Americans except for two young women from Ireland and a young woman lawyer from Canada) jelled instantly.

The following morning, we taxied to a dignified auditorium located just inside the gate of the elegant Villa Borghese Gardens, where the documentary *Pink Smoke Over the Vatican* (with Italian subtitles) was shown to an audience that included journalists and representatives of various progressive church organizations.

*Pink Smoke* features Fr. Roy Bourgeois and includes background stories of women who, long having felt a yearning for priesthood, have finally been ordained priests and bishops. Scenes show them as young girls "playing priest" distributing NECCO wafers as "Holy Communion", or traveling to various churches to find a priest who would permit them to be altar girls. It also shows them today as articulate spokespersons

for women's rights in the renewed Catholic Church. Also shown is a conversation with an official of the Pittsburgh diocese having a hard time explaining why women are barred from ordination. The DVD is now available from its producers

[www.pinksmokeoverthevatican.org](http://www.pinksmokeoverthevatican.org).

After that event, we arrived at the European-wide Boulevard, the Vatican dome



Roy Bourgeois, MM and Women's Ordination Contingent

looked careworn, even dilapidated, and as if it saddened by the shaky economy and sordid stories swirling throughout the world. The Dome and the marble of the colonnade, in fact, have been soiled by the centuries as can be observed where a very small section has been scrubbed to its original gleaming splendor. Moreover, the magnificent entrance to the basilica itself is now marred by a security check point, and the elegant plaza is circled with low cement cones that have sprouted, like poison mushrooms, similar to those we see outside our public buildings in America.

While the plaza still teems with tourists, the cones make it possible for the police to

stretch metal barriers between them to sometimes obstruct entrance. Having stepped from our adventurous taxis some six blocks from the Vatican, our intrepid group unfurled banners and carried them - amidst bewildered drivers - down the middle of the Via della Concillazione toward the Vatican plaza. The purple banner declared ORDAIN WOMEN NOW. The red banner proclaimed GOD IS CALLING WOMEN TO BE PRIESTS - in English and Italian. The white one read CALL TO ACTION. The Italian police had quite cordially accompanied us down the street but, as we approached Vatican territory, the police stretched metal barriers between the cement cones and barred us from the plaza. Forced to retreat across the street, the two Irish women in our group used their best Italian to persuade the suave undercover policemen to permit us to deliver the

With absolutely no warning, the banners became a huge issue, maybe because someone had read the banner written in Italian, and maybe because the attempted negotiations had dragged on too long. A not-so-suave policeman wearing wrap-around shades unceremoniously grabbed the (at that point, folded) banners from startled members of our group. In a totally confusing two minutes, the banners were thrown into the trunk of the police car and, despite objections, the police insisted that two of the women involved in the irreconcilable conciliations get into the police car. As she bent to enter, Marian instructed us to call the American and Irish embassies. We did. Off they went, sirens blaring.

And before the confusion could dissipate, Roy Bourgeois wearing his Roman collar, Vatican in the background, was gently forced into a police car. That was the picture that flew around the world via AP, Reuters, CNS and the Irish Times, and drew more attention to the women's ordination issue than it might otherwise have garnered. We are told that 238 new outlets carried the story. Those arrested were held for about two hours and then released, so we all celebrated the dramatic morning by indulging in an Italian lunch at sidewalk tables in the Roman sun.

On Tuesday, we were able to schedule meetings with the heads of two religious communities (Holy Child Sisters and Franciscans) headquartered in Rome. On Wednesday, an appointment was arranged with Archbishop Joseph Tobin of the Vatican Congregation for Religious. Roy delivered the signatures and had a very cordial exchange. The Vatican knew we had been in town.

In May, Fr. Roy Bourgeois will be awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters by the Chicago Theological Seminary (United Church of Christ) and will give the commencement address.

Despite what we have read about his rocky relationship with the Church hierarchy and authorities at Maryknoll, Fr. Roy Bourgeois is still a member and a priest in good standing.

We take heart from Margaret Mead's reminder that a small group of thoughtful individuals can bring change.

**Bob is a member of the CTA (Call To Action) Staff, and Pat is a long-time supporter of Roy Bourgeois' SOA Protests as well as CTA.**

## Daily Bread

### “Cri de Coeur”

DISPATCHED FROM  
SAIGON DECEMBER 20, 2011

by Robert Morris

“Do not abandon me!” the tyke cried out to the man approaching the kitchen table. The boy had spoken in Vietnamese to the young priest. I asked what the boy said. The priest repeated the words in English, “Do not abandon me!”

In past times the little fellow with sallow skin and dark brown eyes would have reminded us of those cheap prints in the 1970s’ of little doe-eyed children. But this was the tail end of 2011, and the scabs and pustules on his lips and the blood dripping from his mouth were a giveaway—the little fellow was in the throes of advanced AIDS, and he only wanted not to be abandoned on the streets of Saigon again. The young and handsome priest—he was a paradox to us—had rescued the innocent boy, his parents dead from AIDS, left on the street by his uncle, and then again abandoned by the public hospital as too sick to survive.



Fr John Toai, with HIV infant

“Do not abandon me”, it was a cry from the heart, and he would not be abandoned this time; he had arrived at MAI TAM, a house of hope for him and countless other innocent children in Saigon over the last six years. The young priest had rescued this victim, as he has been doing for six years, and brought him to the center where he would get loving support from the volunteer caretakers; he would be able to eat, rest, get the life-saving medicines to make him well again, if it were not already too late. In this

season of Christmas, the priest would say this was a little miracle, that this tiny child should find a place to lay his head, just as Mary and Joseph were able to rest in the stable.

Therein lays the paradox for me and my wife Jill; late in our lives, we had stumbled upon this place of love and this extraordinary human, John Toai. The orphanage has been described by one Australian volunteer as “love in action”; the priest described by a Canadian volunteer as a 21<sup>st</sup> century Fr Damian de Veuster,

the leper priest of Molaki. Some five years ago we had been asked to provide the seed money to start up the Mai Tam House of Hope, which then had only five HIV/AIDS orphans. It would be an easy funding task we thought — providing medicines and food to assure life.

Now five years on, we were brought to tears by the plea of this abandoned child—maybe the 600th child to pass through the Center, most to be saved and to flourish, some to die. The cri de coeur convinced us that in the sunset of our lives we would press on for another year, press forward, always forward, never back, in the words of the “Little Prince.” We would never again have this opportunity to be with such an extraordinary human being as this Father John and to aid so many innocent children.

*Jill and Robert Morris founded the website [www.maitamhouseofhope.com](http://www.maitamhouseofhope.com) five years ago to collect donations for MAI TAM House of Hope in Saigon (HCMC), a self-supporting home for HIV/AIDS orphans and widows. Jill is an Education Specialist in severe special needs. Robert is an International Health Consultant, and served with the US Navy and Marine Corps in Vietnam in the war. Jill and Rob have worked closely for seven years with our Iraqi family, Sabah, Omar, and Ali.*

## Circle of Being

### Stations of the Cross with Occupy Protest Chaplains and Agape

by John Crawford-Gallagher

*Were you there when they struck that dirty deal? Where you there when they took away my home? Were you there when they crucified my Lord?* These are some of the verses sung during Agape’s Good Friday collaboration with Occupy Boston’s Protest Chaplains.

As we processed through the cavernous streets of Boston’s Financial District, stopping at “Stations of the Cross” along the way – Bank of America, Downtown Crossing, the Irish Famine Memorial, and others – we reflected on modern crucifixions caused by economic injustice. We considered the faceless workers who power our economy, bankers who strike dirty deals, a family member whose home was taken, immigrants, and a homeless church congregation.

Unlike most Occupy protests, we weren’t there to point fingers. We were there to reflect on our own participation in economic violence. The young woman who reflected on Simon of Cyrene asked us to repeat the words, “I am Simon of Cyrene. I am complicit.” She shared that in Simon’s act of mercy, and our own, there exists a paradox of affirming an unjust system in order to get close enough to Jesus to lift his cross. By the eighth



John Crawford Gallagher and Emily Jendzejec

station we approached the Massachusetts Statehouse where familiar faces of the Agape community led the second half of the vigil in silence and heartfelt reflections.

### Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem

by Emily Jendzejec

With steadfast faith and unwavering commitment it was women who followed Jesus to the cross. It was women who bore witness to his suffering without fear of their own

persecution as they bravely and openly wailed and lamented over his impending death. And it was women who kept vigil by Jesus’ tomb, in mourning...in anticipation.

With steadfast faith and unwavering commitment women continue to serve the Catholic Church, even though the institutional Church does not recognize or value a call that many women have to ordination and church leadership. So, Jesus continues to speak to women in the Catholic Church, who remain silenced, who are denied their true calling.

Just yesterday the Pope spoke to priests in Rome at Holy Thursday Mass, denouncing any for even

questioning the church’s position on women’s ordination. Even dialogue is denied in Church owned spaces. In the past few months, parish priests in Virginia and Nebraska have taken away the rights of young girls to be altar servers, a lesbian woman was denied communion because of her sexual orientation, and the American Bishops refuse to acknowledge the reality of American Catholic women and their use of contraceptives. We lament over these attacks on women by a religious institution that claims to promote social justice.

Yet, we remain vigilant, as we walk with Jesus, as we walk with one another...as witnesses to oppression and inequality within the Church’s walls and within our world...for brothers and sisters everywhere who are denied the opportunity to fully live out their authentic, God given vocations because of their gender or sexual orientation.

We continue with steadfast faith and unwavering commitment in remembrance of the prophetic witness of our foremothers whom Jesus stopped to speak to on that dreadful day.

*Emily is a founding member of The Creatively Maladjusted. She is finishing up her second year at Harvard Divinity School.*

continued from page 1

question: "Where is my passion? Why can't I just go for it?" That "it" became defined in small group conversations as taking a stand, moving into the lineage of "voluntary displacement", which I had posited as one way of becoming maladjusted to America's war economy—symbolic or actual tax resistance. We encouraged the group to decide on an action step together to underscore the connection between their indentured servant-hood to the US government and the profligacy of war spending.

Some mentioned their current involvement in action steps already taken in opposition to another area of dominative power, that of the Church, as they had been involved with distributing petitions in support of priests and professors such as John Shea at BC, outspoken in his support of women's ordination, who were taking strong stands with resulting "displacement" and relocation by the college.

### Concluding Thoughts

In the end, we realized that "we are not going to solve all of the issues," but rather, we would "keep struggling with the questions" and do so, "feeling at peace." A tall order, but, as we said our goodbyes, we felt the tension of what one of the women articulated as "the steady rhythm of slow growth and the urgent question of the retreat: What does it take to really go for it?"

Someone responded that a way of "going for it" is to come to a place of "deeper stillness" rather than the need to "be going somewhere, doing something." Instead, "living more deeply into a nonviolent way" emphasized the need for relationship and

risk-taking intimacy with others, two themes we examined as cornerstones of community by studying the icon called "The Sweet Kiss". This icon depicts the infant Jesus stroking his Mother's cheek as she leans in to receive His tender touch. We reflected on how a maladjusted life can be lonely and that intimacy in community makes it less so.

In our closing circle, we affirmed the efforts of the core group at this milestone Agape retreat led and conceived by the Creatively Maladjusted, now experiencing a revitalized energy and a greater need to continue this process of humble truth sharing, while seeking authenticity in our relationships with one another, the earth and all of its creatures. A powerful insight took hold: contemplation without action is like religion without spirituality, or nonviolence without love of enemy. Our prayer was for practice, community, risk-taking, and that passionate yes. **I am really going for it this time.**

## Going For It: Latent Hopes and Creative Maladjustment

by Geoff Gusoff

I'm 27 years old. I don't want to wake up when I'm 72 and regret that I never really "went for it." But I know if I just let the inertia carry me, that's exactly what will happen.

What do I mean by "go for it"? What I don't mean is the anxious desperation to accumulate as many experiences as possible before my time runs out. This "nervous binge" mentality seems at least as likely to lead to a feeling of profound emptiness as

the passive floating through life that is assumed to be its opposite.

What I mean by "going for it" is the real opposite of the nervous binge. It's about tuning in to the still small voice, (call it conscience, grace, or deepest self) and allowing it to shape one's life entirely. Therefore, it's not based on acquisition, accumulation and activity, but rather on simplicity, solitude and silence, values that clash with the inertia of a culture driven by consumption, distraction and complicity.

Diagnosing this culture of inertia, WH Auden perhaps puts it best when he speaks of "All the conventions conspire/To make this fort assume/The furniture of home;/Lest we should see where we are/Lost in a haunted wood/Children afraid of the night/Who have never been happy or good."

Dr. King provides an antidote to this inertia, when in reflecting on Paul's admonition to "be ye not conformed to this world but rather transformed by the renewing of your mind (Rom. 12:2)" he calls on us to be "transformed nonconformists" who are "creatively maladjusted." This call for creative maladjustment has become a clarion call for myself and others who seek to be in the world but not of it; to have intimate relationships but with an intimacy that opens us more to others; to feel whole, but in a way that brings wholeness to others; to fight the monsters of racism, sexism, militarism and economic injustice, but not become monsters ourselves in the process. Ultimately, we want to live life abundantly but in a way that gives life abundantly.

How do we do this? For every person it's somewhat different, but creatively maladjusted heroes from the past like Dorothy Day, Gandhi, and Dr. King remind us that strong interior life, community, and

concrete "experiments with truth" are essential. We seek these through retreats, potluck gatherings, live-in communities, discernment action circles, contemplative prayer, political action, and building connections with the Occupy Movement and the Agape Community.

What's next? It's hard to say. Since creative maladjustment emerged as a guiding concept on an Agape retreat three years ago, it has attracted interest from young people in a variety of fields who have developed spaces to more deeply engage it. Many come and go given the demands of work, studies, or family, and these spaces are constantly evolving.

What remains constant is the connection many young people feel with the spirit of creative maladjustment. This latent energy is apparent from the constant influx of new faces to potlucks, retreats, and other "creatively maladjusted" events. A multitude of young people are searching for communities and practices that will enable them to go for it, not in the sense of a Nike "Just Do It" or a cheap carpe diem, but as a radical transformation into a lifestyle of creative maladjustment.

The conversion of this latent desire into practice is by no means inevitable. I feel the profound precarity of this process of actualization within myself every day. But if we keep seeking out creative practices, if we keep developing stronger communities, if we keep building ties with those already living a creatively maladjusted lifestyle albeit anonymously, maybe we can make a fire from these embers. Maybe then we can wake up when we're 72 knowing that despite all of our limitations and failings, we really did go for it.

With our greenhouses and our gardens and the plant food we grow to eat in them, we learn to bring food production back home where it has always traditionally been in the simpler, the saner and more sustainable societies of our ancestors.

### Ignite the Wood — Replenish the Soil

When we finished the chimney and hooked up our wood stove in Brigid House, we created yet another woodpile. Wood's final destination is the hearth woodstove, that sacred gathering place that beckons us from the biting cold to the togetherness of warmth and circle of conversation. To complete this loop we make one final run to our garden with the ashes from the burned logs, replenishing our soil with nitrogen. There is much of the peace of Jesus to be found in these new non-injurious and sustainable ways—"give and it shall be given to you—good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over" (Luke 6:38).

*Building the Circle: continued from page 2*  
impression of unrestricted, unlimited supplies of energy with no observable environmental catastrophe while our collective memories seem dangerously short with the recent BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico and extreme hurricanes like Katrina and Irene.

Our community has recently added solar hot water systems placing a new array of solar panels on both community house rooftops. These solar hot water systems trap thermal heat from the sun, unlike solar electricity which converts sunlight into electricity. The sun's heat and light energy is free of charge, abundant, and does not create a single harmful byproduct or greenhouse gas emission, becoming an energy source liberated from corporate owned and controlled profit motive.

### Closing the Food Loop

Because the earth has sacred value and because we are made in God's image, eating the food of the earth is a sacred act. Eating is also a bridge that unites human culture and survival with the earth as a vibrant and fecund source of nourishment. Today we have a

growing awareness of how improving our eating habits can strengthen our own health and better maintain the health of the environment. To this end, we built our food generating laboratory, a greenhouse, which continues the food loop. This "body nourishing temple" is symbolic of the choice we must make to heal our damaged system of food growing. The local greenhouse that connects to the local farm is the most environmentally urgent choice we need to make over the corporate business of agriculture and its cancer-producing chemicals and pesticides.

When Abe Lincoln was President, 98% of the American public was directly involved in agriculture while today it is down to 2%. We have subcontracted our food production and our health to a corporate food industry. Agribusiness flourishes because we depend on low nutrition, mass produced celery from Florida, oranges from California, peaches from Georgia, broccoli from Bolivia. We ship this "cheap" food supply from far away bioregions and drill more oil from foreign lands for their transport.

The average trip for the food we eat? 1,300 miles. This business of agriculture yields inefficient single-crop monoculture farms depleting the topsoil. 22% to 33% of climate

change gases can be traced to our food system. A good example is that one pound of meat takes one half gallon of gasoline to produce. Another form of environmental devastation? We must be quick to go to war to secure oil supplies that protect our heavy carbon footprint way of life.

Our agribusiness alternative, the greenhouse, is the agent of the local economy where we grow our seedlings and lettuce beds and learn the hard lessons of beginning to choose to eat what can be grown locally, taking Thoreau's advice, "live in each season as it passes, breath its air, taste its fruit." Can we shift our food consumption to fruits and vegetables of Southern New England and away from South America? Can we evolve our eating habits in the direction of a vegetarian diet to be more harmonious with our more plant eating digestive systems? We possess plant grinding teeth not meat ripping carnivorous cat like teeth. We secrete digestive enzymes in saliva and stomach that don't digest meat easily, especially the raw meat that carnivore animals regularly eat. Our liver and intestines assimilate our food on a 24 hour cycle while typical carnivores, like the cat, eliminate in one to two hours after consuming their kill.

Alicen Roberts  
Northern Ireland Assignment  
March 19, 2011 Lyrics to the song  
"A Bird's Eye View":

[Verse 1]  
A bird soars overhead, throughout the seamless sky. Back and forth across, below peace walls stand high Unaware and unencumbered by the boundary And I wonder to myself, what does she see?  
She sees...  
[Chorus]  
When we have the scope of a bird, over all landscape Views of Earth's cracks and gapes, we can leave our peace  
[Verse 2]  
A street runs through the town, and walls run through the street A mural painted on, beneath a fence nine feet And adorning all this structured fear there sits a camera  
And I wonder to myself, what does it see?  
It sees...  
[Chorus]

[Verse 3]  
One side little Seamus Murphy, runs and hugs him mum On the other young Sean Easton, hears a father's call to come  
Crossing through their parallels of daily life the wall stands And I wonder to myself, what do they see?  
They see...  
[Bridge]  
And with my rain tongue, heavy with hope I'm trying not to assume, saying things like peace and progress Without knowing the feeling of having an interface be my address. But with the sunlight winking off the thorned wire, Maybe together we could envision the golden escape. The reshape, the peace to which we aspire. And from Earth's cracks and creases, We can coax things out that will bloom. If we progress and not assume.  
[Chorus]

Alicen, who graduates this May, has been coming to Agape since her sophomore year at Smith

## Voices

I am always inspired by reading about your ministry of peace, justice, and protecting creation—the whole beloved community of life that gives glory to God and serves God's purposes. Please accept this donation in support of your solar hot water and/or your PV system. We have had solar hot water (but not exclusively, as it can be hooked into our oil heater), for 28 years. With a few updates and repairs, the system is well past its expected 20 yr. lifespan and working well. May you have the same success with your system and serve as a model and inspiration to many. Such systems are quite common in California and New Mexico and we have almost as much sun here—just have too often a failure of imagination!

Jeanie Graustein

I read Jerrod Oltmann's article about becoming a military chaplain which sounded to be on the defensive—and offensive, a chance to attack. To choose to support the military institution because he is a good citizen is why we had slavery for so long before we made it at least illegal. That mass murder is immoral didn't seem to mean anything to him. Wish he could have chosen to minister as a religious—not as a military spokesman.

Alice Kast, Pax Christi, MA

In Ft. Myers, a woman was ordained in the Anglican (Episcopal) church a few weeks ago. She had been a Benedictine nun for thirty-five years. Too bad we have to go in the back door.

Sara Donahue

## News Notes

### Farewell and Rest in Peace

#### Bob and Marie Lueders

Faithful friends and long-time Mission Council members, died within a year of each other, Marie in June 2011 and Bob in January, 2012, making their absence at Agape a double loss. We have known Bob and Marie for over 30 years. Bob was a member of Agape's Mission Council, faithfully coming to meetings while dealing with neurological and heart conditions which made speech difficult. Bob's presence was that of a mostly silent, always smiling, even holy witness in his commitment to Jesus and gospel nonviolence and unstinting devotion to the building of the Agape Community, which he described as "bootstraps nonviolence." Rest in Peace dear friends. You made an indelible mark in the lives of many in this community from its inception. Your spirits are alive in the very walls of Francis House. Gratitude to donors who sent gifts to the community in their remembrance.

### Agape Searches for Long-Term Interns

We are looking to the future at Agape, and are welcoming applicants for community membership during our transition from short-term and year-long interns to those who wish to explore a called and committed life. We encourage individuals and families to explore meaningful work, beautiful surroundings and a vibrant network of 30 years of work in the vineyard. Interested?

### The Many Sides of Peace: Essays on Christian Nonviolence and Sustainable Living

A compilation of essays by Brayton Shanley, Agape's co-founder, will be ready for completion in one month. These essays have been re-written and updated from *Servant Songs* over the past 20 years. The book will be ready in June, with or without a publisher. Please send us your order if you wish to purchase an early release @ \$15.

Brayton was among the 130 arrested at Entergy Headquarters for Vermont Yankee.

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Agape Work Day with Betheny Hill School Volunteers



From left, Cornelia Sullivan, Janet & Alden Poole, members of Agape's Mission Council at St. Patrick's Day Peace Parade



Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant Protest March

## AGAPE CALENDAR



**May 12—7-9 pm—Spirituality and the Arts:** Come to an evening of poetry and song. Bring your poetry and song.

**May 14-18—Iona College Rural Immersion—**Workshops, wood-hauling, gardening. Create your own immersion group and contact us.

**June 16<sup>th</sup>—9am – 5 pm—Workday at Agape.** Come early; Stay late. Help put wood up for the winter. Raindate, Sat. June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>—10 am to evening pot-luck—Agape's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.**