



THE VISITATION

THE PUBLICATION OF THE NATIVITY HOUSE

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Letter from the Directors

Dear Friends of Nativity House,

Advent Greetings! Here we are, collectively in a season of waiting. This shorter season of waiting and anticipation of only three and a half weeks til Christmas has been paralleled by the Global Pandemic in which we have all been waiting and in some cases suffering.

During Advent, I always turn to Mary, our Mother. Through her upbringing of being educated by the synagogue elders, she was steeped in scripture. She, along with the Israelites, were awaiting the rise of a Messiah. They also were waiting in the long suffering of the Roman military occupation. God had promised "all this" about the person of the Messiah: he would be of the Davidic line; he would bear the iniquities of the nation; he would be born of a virgin; he would restore the sight of the blind and cast out demons; the government would be the weight upon his shoulders; and the outcast would be lifted up.

Mary knew these promises of God. She sings of them in her Magnificat. At Nativity House, we recite this song, Mary's Magnificat, every night as part of evening prayer. I take great comfort in the words. I long for a time when God will indeed knock tyrants from their horses, scatter the bluffing braggarts, and put the callous rich in their place. (Luke 1:46-55) God's justice that Mary sings of seems too good to be true. But this year as I ponder Mary's words something new is welling up.

Mary, who was steeped in prayer and scripture, who was living through the military occupation of the Romans, had a deep understanding of God's promises. Mary, after experiencing God's faithfulness, had an intensified understanding of who God is and who she is. There was a new clarity. God stepped in and made the inconceivable happen. And when someone cooperates with the inconceivable, lives bear incomprehensible fruit. In this case the fruit is the birth and life of Jesus, the Savior.

After such an event, wouldn't one come to rely fully on God's plan and promise? I marvel at Mary's full abandon of self. Maybe what she is singing is a prayer offering. Mary sings of a time when all of humanity will also have an experience of full reliance on God. Only then will the arrogant, callous, bluffing braggarts be truly aware of who God truly is and their hearts will be aligned with His. This is the justice we all long for.

Advent is a time where we wait with long suffering for an end to this era. We acknowledge this life is a season of restoration. We too

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The Way Back from Inequality

by Mark Galli

"Can you name three of today's billionaires?"

That's how Amar Patel began the November Roundtable discussion at Nativity House. Amar is a constellation: family man, high school teacher, cantor, lector, member of Knights of Columbus, and 2020 vice-presidential candidate for the American Solidarity Party (whose platform is strongly aligned with Catholic social teaching).

After we rattled off Jeff Bezos (Amazon.com), Elon Musk (Tesla), Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook), among others, Amar asked: "Can you name three millionaires from the 1920s?" A few of us were able to quickly name J.D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J.P. Morgan, among others.

Then he asked a question that drove the much of the evening's discussion: "Can you name the millionaires/billionaires from the 1940s and 1950s?" That's when our minds went blank.

Amar reminded us of some reasons for that. The 1920s and 2020s, are widely recognized as periods of dramatic income disparity. Amar kindly spared us the mind-numbing statistics, but one statistic might be helpful to put this into context for this summary article. Income disparity is complicated to measure, but one widely accepted index is the Gini coefficient. It uses a scale from 0 to 1, with zero representing perfect equality (everyone having the same income), while 1 represents perfect inequality

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Letter from the Directors

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are called to steep ourselves in the promises of God for another time, another era.

He'll wipe every tear from their eyes. Death is gone for good—tears gone, crying gone, pain gone—all the first order of things gone (Revelation 21:4-6)

In this there is great hope.

This is the Advent and Christmas hope that we carry with us at Nativity House. In November, we welcomed a second guest mom. Her baby boy is due in March. We also welcomed another community member, Jenny. Jenny is a new nurse working in public health at Catholic Charities, Joliet. This has expanded our community to 9 members. Diana, our first guest mom, is due to give birth to a baby girl any day. We are preparing to say goodbye to Becca. Becca has been a full time intern with Nativity House for two and a half years. She has brought much joy and love to our community in her service to our guest moms and other community members. She will be sorely missed. She is moving to South Bend, Indiana, where she will pursue her life dream of starting a family farm.

We are excited to be hosting our annual Christmas Coffee House. There will be live music, games, good food and drink. Save the date, December 30 @ 7pm, St Dennis Church, Fracaro Hall. We invite all of you to come. Watch our Facebook page for more details and how to RSVP.

Nativity House is blessed to be in the position of growth and goodness. We have witnessed the hardship of the pandemic on many fronts, particularly for the poor and single mothers. Resources seemed to be always waning before the pandemic, now things are stark. We are experiencing this first hand.

We ask you to prayerfully consider supporting Nativity House. Your donations are always used to directly support women who have bravely chosen life. If you are not able to support monetarily, please pray that Nativity House is able to continue the work, for those pondering entering the work of serving the poor, and for courageous women who choose life over death.

Jesus, may we truly rely on you.

May the peace and joy of the season be with you,

Venus & Justin Wozniak

About The Visitation

This newspaper, The Visitation, is a publication on topics of social justice, spirituality, and theology. It is published four times a year by Nativity House. Submissions are accepted from readers everywhere.

To contact us, email us at:

newspaper@nativity-house.org

Past issues are online at:

<http://www.nativity-house.org>

About Nativity House

Nativity House serves as a house of hospitality for first-time mothers in need of residence in the southwest Chicago suburbs. Nativity House operates an on-site community supported farm (CSA) that provides nourishment for the Nativity House and the greater community. Overall, we envision a healing environment focused on the dignity of each person, the dignity of work, and stewardship of the earth.

Nativity House is administered by a board of directors and an advisory committee of individuals with a broad range of experience. Nativity House has formed positive relationships with relevant local organizations that are extremely helpful in carrying out the mission of the house. Nativity House was recognized as a public charity in August, 2011.

To connect with us, please email Venus Wozniak at:

venusad@nativity-house.org

Postal mail should be addressed to:

Nativity House
17141 W. 143rd St.
Lockport, IL 60441

We extend the sincerest thanks to all.

Message on the Inside

by Kevin A. O'Donnell

I've organized quite a few mission trips to places in the U.S. and other countries. What wonderful opportunities I've been able to have with the students who traveled with me, the people we worked with, and especially when my family was able to participate with me.

Usually, the participants each got a custom t-shirt that said the name of the mission trip, the date, and included some inspirational phrase or scripture. One day, when we were working at a prison in Bolivia, I noticed two of the prisoners pointing to one of the student's custom shirts and laughing and eye rolling at it. The phrase on the shirt that year was, "If you want peace, work for justice." There is nothing laughable about that phrase attributed to Pope Paul VI, but watching the guys laugh made me think, "For whom is the phrase meant?"

The next time I had shirts printed for a trip, I had the inspirational phrase printed on the inside of the shirt. It took a little bit of extra conversation with the company doing the printing to get them to understand that, yes, I was asking for printing inside out.

My thought was that the message is equally, and maybe even more so, for the person wearing the shirt. Let the printed message be on your heart.

The concept of solidarity in Catholic social teaching is about looking at what the points are where we have commonalities with other people. My favorite points of connection are laughing and humor, having fun. The Bolivians I know love ripping on me about my terrible Spanish. It makes me happy. It is fun. They have fun. I have fun. And while they rip on me, our group also happens to do good things like

feed people, improve housing situations, donate some money and bring clothing. But a gift is returned to me one hundred times over, from the humor they share with me, with all of us. And, they host us for dinner. They keep in touch on social media when they can add funds to their accounts. One family invited me to be a Godfather to their two kids. We can all laugh together at my Spanish. We give to one another.

Forget for a moment (and only a moment), the concepts of serving the poor and doing good works. Probably not too many people reading this can say that they don't get annoyed, disagree with, have points of conflict with most people in their lives... spouses, children, parents, friends, neighbors, a cat... Are these abrasive moments always intense? No- sometimes they are easy to move on from. But when we think about the moments when

we are in solidarity, it is a right relationship for both of us.

Although I love the opportunities I've had and want to travel and do service more, I will admit that I am not always super exuberant about it. It means time away from my family and my dogs and normalcy and comfort and my TV. We don't always have to be comfortable. We don't always have to be happy. We can and should aim for it. But when people are hurting, hungry, needy, homeless, ugly, bad attitude, dirty... that's where we need to be. It's the Gospel. We don't have to feed thousands of people at one time. Some people can and do. But we can each be there with at least one other person in solidarity. Solidarity.



Kevin A. O'Donnell is the pastoral associate at the Cathedral of St Raymond Nonatus in Joliet, IL

NATIVITY HOUSE
Christmas Coffeehouse
 12.30.2021 @ 7PM
 AT ST DENNIS CHURCH, LOCKPORT

GAMES - SILENT AUCTION - FOOD & MERRYMAKING
 LIVE MUSIC FEATURING

Kevin O'Donnell & Friends
The Coman Sisters
Justin & Venus Wozniak
 and more...

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT DIRECT SERVICES TO EXPECTANT MOTHERS

Compassion in Awe

by Carol Allen

Right now we are trimming our trees and decking our halls, preparing for Christmas. Many of us may be setting out our nativity figurines, with a stable, Mary, Joseph, and hiding the baby Jesus behind a picture frame until the big day. In the middle of dusting off the shepherds and baking cookies, I offer these two themes of Catholic Social Teaching to mull over: Rights and Responsibilities and the Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.

Rights and Responsibilities sound obvious to explain but are harder to enact. It is easy to talk about rights. We all know what we have a right to: life, liberty, dignity. These rights are ours as image-

bearers of the Creator. What is sometimes harder to remember is that these rights belong to everyone, even those we forget to include. The unhoused person walking down the cars at an intersection has unalienable rights. The person we disagree with politically also has these rights.

When Joseph knocked on doors, desperately looking for a place for his wife to give birth, he had these rights. Mary, who was probably in labor by this point, had these rights. But were those rights cherished? Were they acknowledged by the innkeepers' refusals? Were they respected by the oppressors of the nation, forcing them to travel? Who had a

responsibility to this couple in distress? It is easy to say no one. It is their fault they did not make arrangements ahead of time. It is their fault they did not go to the right people. It is their fault they decided to have a baby.

"Here is what we seek: a compassion that can stand in awe at what the poor have to carry rather than stand in judgement at how they carry it." This quote from Fr. Greg Boyle, SJ, illustrates how we can change the narrative around rights and responsibilities. If we recognize that everyone is deserving of these rights by virtue of existence, we have responsibilities to each other. We live in a world that often

denies rights to whomever it seeks to exclude. We can pretend we are unaware and ask like Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gn 4:9) Or we can recognize that we are responsible for each other.

The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable asks us to put this responsibility into action. When we make decisions, we need to ask ourselves how the different outcomes affect those who need our help the most. This can be a simple action, like choosing to wear a mask and protect those most vulnerable to the virus or shopping fair trade. It can be a larger action, like taking into

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The Way Back from Inequality

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(one person receiving all the income).

In the 1920s, the Gini topped out at .49; in 2020s, it has hovered around .51. In what's sometimes called "The Great Compression (1937-1967), the coefficient was as low as .37. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Income_inequality_in_the_United_States].

So what happened? Two equalizing factors: The Great Depression and World War II. During this era, we saw higher tax rates, stronger unions, and healthy post-war economic growth. And the reason such efforts gained traction, noted Amar, was psychological/spiritual: There was a heightened sense of solidarity among Americans. We were reminded during these crisis times that we were indeed our brothers' and sisters' keepers.

One would have thought the crisis of COVID might have had the same effect. But as Amar noted and as we are well aware, the economic gap between rich and poor has only widened during the pandemic. Many blue-collar workers—whose work usually demands being present with others—were laid off. And those who weren't—that is, essential workers like grocery clerks—were forced to be exposed to the coronavirus day in and day out.

Meanwhile, most white-collar workers just started working from home, "going to" meetings with Zoom, ordering their food from Door Dash, and their other necessities from Amazon.com.


Is it any wonder that the technology giants—already oversized—exploded in growth during COVID, as did their bottom lines? Instead of COVID being a leveler, as

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Easy Essays:

What the Catholic Worker Believes

by Peter Maurin (1877-1949)



The Catholic Worker believes in the gentle personalism of traditional Catholicism.	The Catholic Worker believes in the establishment of Farming Communes where each one works according to his ability and gets according to his need.
The Catholic Worker believes in the personal obligation of looking after the needs of our brother.	The Catholic Worker believes in creating a new society within the shell of the old with the philosophy of the new, which is not a new philosophy but a very old philosophy, a philosophy so old that it looks like new.
The Catholic Worker believes in the daily practice of the Works of Mercy.	
The Catholic Worker believes in Houses of Hospitality for the immediate relief of those who are in need.	

We Can Work It Out

by Jenny Coman

One of the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching is entitled, The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers. This teaching upholds two fundamental truths 1. Work has dignity and 2. Workers have rights. Catholics believe that work has dignity not only because of the many positive effects it can have on human development, but also because our God, the creator, the original worker, participates in work with us. Each time we pull ourselves out of bed, drive that long commute, send that email, wipe those runny noses or that spilled juice, we work together with God to bring His vision of the world to life.

However, our sin disfigures work, as it does all good things, into slavery. Left unchecked, work can tear us away from God. It does

this by feeding our sense of pride and independence, and before we know it, we have made work into our god and lost touch with God Himself. Work, and the economy it sustains, can also become a way dominating, dividing, and dehumanizing people. Men and women can feel trapped in work that is physically, emotionally, and spiritually harmful to them in order to receive the money they need to survive. Still worse, is when businesses and corporations, whose products and services we blindly use, profit from child labor, human trafficking, or environmental devastation.

To get back to doing the kind of dignified work that God intended for us, we must fight to preserve the rights of workers. The rights of workers, as defined by the United States Conference of

Catholic Bishops (USCCB) include, “the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions, as well as to organize and join unions or other associations”. We must vote for legislation which preserves these rights, and advocate for those who have had their rights denied them. We must also diligently preserve our right to rest, emotionally and physically, by taking a sabbath day each week, and an intentional sabbath hour each day, if possible. We can do our research, reduce our consumption, and shift our spending habits to support businesses who pay their employees fair wages and source their materials ethically.

Ultimately, God wishes to be our ultimate provider. He rejoices in our good work just as fervently as

He longs for us to lay down our work and rest at the end of the day. In the Beatles song referenced by the title of this writing, I imagine God to singing us to see our lives and our work His way, and to bring our problems to Him rather than try to work it all out by ourselves. The many challenges which arise from work can easily overshadow the beautiful gift that God created in his breath which brought forth life, and then gave to us when he tasked Adam with naming the animals. On this day, thank God for the work you have to do and consecrate each task, small and large, to seeing His glory on this earth.



Jenny Coman is a maternal child health educator and a RN who's mission is to create peaceful environments rooted in truth.

Creation Musings of a Lay Franciscan

by Michael Huck

The Diocese of Joliet, Laudato Si Ministries, hosted a Feast of St Francis Animal Blessing & Prayer Service for Endangered Species on October 4, at the Mayslake Peabody Estate. The prayer service was held outside the replica of the Portiuncula. The original Portiuncula can be found just outside of Assisi in Italy. Mike Huck recounts some of his reflections from this day.

“They’re bringing red worms!” I let that sink in as I listened on the phone. I thought, “Seriously, red worms at the Feast of St. Francis Blessing of the Animals and Endangered Species?” I paused to filter my bias towards dogs, cats, and bunnies as proper for the event, and then my little Franciscan heart gave a resounding, “Yes!”

As envisioned by St. Francis of Assisi, if we are to move from being masters or stewards of creation to being in kinship with our fellow creatures, then even the lowly red worm working in a compost bin must be seen as loved and cherished by God. When the love among the Trinity exploded in the Big Bang, God’s life and love infused all things great and small, a first Incarnation, making them worthy of admiration. In the second Incarnation, Christ deemed all creation worthy by walking the earth and breathing it all in. No wonder St. Francis’ Canticle of Creation speaks mostly of inanimate objects, calling sun, moon, water, earth, wind, and fire “brother and sisters”. Not just humans, cows, chickens, and

sheep, but everything created by a Loving God. Red worms too!

A story about St. Francis illustrates this. Francis preached of God’s love to a flock of noisy birds, who grew silent and listened attentively to his words. For many, this is a story of his holiness, but to him, it was time to reflect. Why had he failed to speak to the birds as brothers and sisters all along? Why had he failed to be in a relationship with them?

Ah yes, red worms. Francis used say he was but a worm, truly a sign of humility before an amazing God. But it was also an acknowledgment that he was loved, just as the lowly worm crawling in the mulch was loved by its Creator. This great

recognition of the outpouring of God’s love became a visible prayer, as Francis encountered people, animals, plants, mountains, and caves. Some say he even picked up worms on the road so others would not trample them - a bit of quirkiness or a bit of profound Love?

These musing from the October 4th feast day, challenge me to rejoice in the lowly red worm. To value the lives of all creatures, those I see and those who exist quietly, unknown to me. It invites me to speak up when creation is threatened and to live my own life sustainably. Who knows, perhaps one of those red worms will love me too.



*Michael Huck, OFS
Secular Franciscan Order*


The Way Back from Inequality

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we might have hoped, it only exacerbated the income disparities we lament. The poor continue to struggle to make a decent life for themselves in a volatile economy while the richest in our land are made more famous still by bankrolling billions so they and their friends can enjoy a few minutes in space.

Amar helped us understand why self-interest is so consuming today by reminding us how the meaning of freedom has shifted dramatically. For centuries, starting with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—and adapted by Augustine, Aquinas, and other Christian philosophers—freedom meant the ability to do what is right—to do the good. Since the Enlightenment, with philosophers like John Locke among many others, freedom has come to mean to be unshackled from any constraint—social, religious, and legal—that prevents me from doing what I want to do.

Is it any wonder that in a society baptized in and catechized with this idea of freedom, solidarity between races and classes has broken down so completely?


In such wide-ranging conversations, the way forward is not always clear-cut. And thus ensued some good back and forth on whether we should strive for independence or learn to be dependent on others. But the very context of the conversation suggests that one way forward is already in play in Lockport: Forming close communities, in which people live with and around others in day-to-day life and work. This is the primary way to remind us that we are, in fact, our brothers' and sisters' keepers. 

Mark Galli is a retired journalist living in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, and a member of St. Michael's Catholic Church in Wheaton.

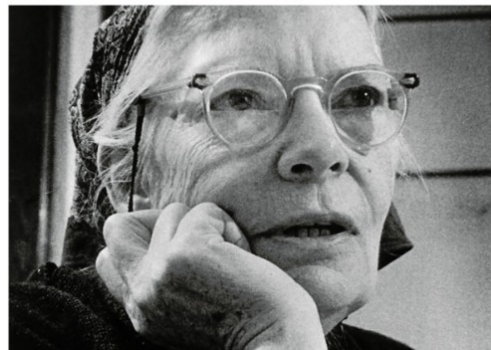
A Saint for a New Socioeconomic Order

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Subordinate Nature of Capital, Participatory Management, Payment Solidarity, Inter-cooperation, Social Transformation, Universality, and Education. The average wage differential between employees in the lowest and highest paid positions continues to be 1:5. Until the 2008 recession, no employee had ever been laid off at Mondragon. The Catholic roots of Mondragon's remarkable success show how the combination of these principles can make for a thriving, worker-oriented economic model. Arizmendi's vision of human work and dignity was much larger than the typical view of the nature of work, and

show how recognizing the unique value of the human person can transform the workplace. 

A native Texan, Elias is the editor and founding publisher of Solidarity Hall, a group blog focused on reimagining community. Elias studied classics and comparative literature before working in business publishing and non-profit consulting, and is broadly published in print and digital media.



The shepherds did it, their hurrying to the crib atoned for the people who would flee from Christ.

The wise men did it; their journey across the world made up for those who refused to stir one hand's breadth from the routine of their lives to go to Christ. Even the gifts that the wise men brought have in themselves an obscure recompense and atonement for what would follow later in this Child's life. For they brought gold, the king's emblem, to make up for the crown of thorns that He would wear; they offered incense, the symbol of praise, to make up for the mockery and the spitting; they gave Him myrrh, to heal and soothe, and He was wounded from head to foot and no one bathed his wounds. The women at the foot of the cross did it too, making up for the crowd who stood by and sneered.

We can do it too, exactly as they did. We are not born too late. We do it by seeing Christ and serving Christ in friends and strangers, in everyone we come in contact with. While almost no one is unable to give some hospitality or help to others, those for whom it is really impossible are not debarred from giving room to Christ, because, to take the simplest of examples, in those they live with or work with is Christ disguised. All our life is bound up with other people; for almost all of us happiness and unhappiness are conditioned by our relationship with other people. What a simplification of life it would be if we forced ourselves to see that everywhere we go is Christ, wearing out socks we have to darn, eating the food we have to cook, laughing with us, silent with us, sleeping with us.

All this can be proved, if proof is needed, by the doctrines of the Church. We can talk about Christ's Mystical Body, about the vine and the branches, about the Communion of Saints. But Christ Himself has proved it for us, and no one has to go further than that. For He said that a glass of water given to a beggar was given to Him. He made heaven hinge on the way we act towards Him in his disguise of commonplace, frail and ordinary human beings.

*from Room For Christ
Dorothy Day
December, 1945*

Our Active Call to Family and Community

by Bryon Pulliam

The family is thus an agent of pastoral activity through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and its legacy of varied forms of witness, namely solidarity with the poor, openness to a diversity of people, the protection of creation, moral and material solidarity with other families, including those most in need, commitment to the promotion of the common good and the transformation of unjust social structures, beginning in the territory in which the family lives, through the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. (Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia, 290)

Our call to family and community begins with our recognition of God's love for us and our unique call to holiness. We are called to live out authentic Christian charity in our everyday lives through the relationships within our families and our communities. St. John

Paul II told us, "The family is called to be a temple, that is, a house of prayer: a simple prayer, full of effort and tenderness. A prayer that becomes life, so that all of life becomes prayer."

Building up the family and our communities is an undertaking that must be rooted in prayer. It is the epicenter of this call and we must be bold and daring in spreading His love by uniting our families and communities in what is quite possibly the most important form of prayer; the witness of our lives. We are called to practice attention to grace within the daily rhythms of our lives. The development of this mindfulness will allow us to turn our entire lives into a form of prayer. It is then that we are able to fully and freely share the peace, joy and consolation of the Holy Spirit with our families, friends and the wider community.

This can be a struggle in our society. We sit at the doorstep of a culture consumed by materialism and relativism. So often people succumb to feelings of anxiety, shame and isolation. It becomes easy to be distracted with technology and the result is loss of connection to one another. There is a need of remembering that we are children of the light and that we are called to live in freedom and love. Our central development for this love begins at home. We must come to accept the grace of God through those around us: in a smile, an embrace or the laughter that we share with those we love.

One of the best ways to build up our families and communities is by drawing close to God and staying present with Him in each moment and taking every breath aligned to His Voice, His Will. We find small victories when we choose to stay mindful and

present each moment in His grace. In the Epistle of James we receive maybe the most important instruction for how to turn our entire lives into a form of prayer: "Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." This will align our families and communities with true identity - each human is holy and good. God invites us to participate in the simple beautiful moments of love with your families and communities and know that this unique form of prayer is building His Kingdom!



Bryon Pulliam is a special needs educator and CSA shareholder who is actively discerning a call to religious life.

Compassion in Awe

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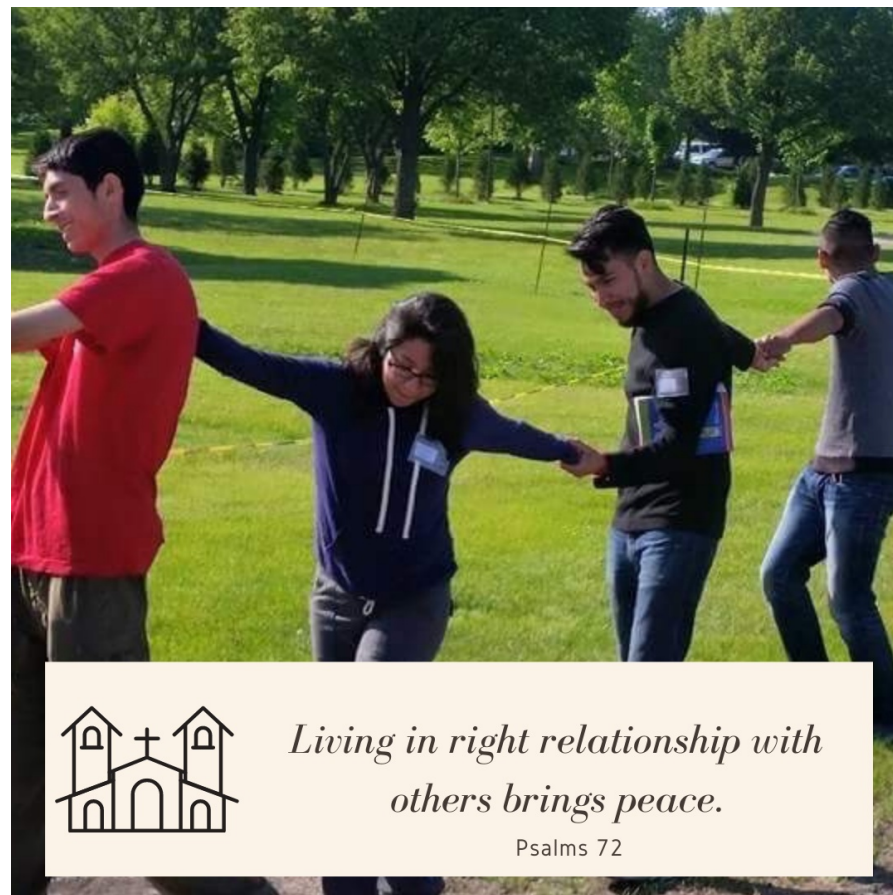
account a candidate's policies toward the poor before voting or making lifestyle changes to protect the environment. Joseph, Mary, and the soon-to-be-born Christ child were certainly poor and certainly vulnerable. How might the story have been different if the first innkeeper felt responsible for them and made a different choice? How might the story have been different if no one gave them shelter?

When we set nativity scenes in our churches and homes, we symbolically create housing for

the unhoused. The call of Catholic Social Teaching is to allow our symbols to lead us to something deeper, stronger, and more glorious: the realization that the God who saves has given us the responsibility and the power to rescue each other.



Carol Allen is a Campus Minister at Benedictine University in Lisle, IL.



Living in right relationship with others brings peace.

Psalms 72



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Nativity House
17141 W. 143rd St.
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A Saint for a New Socioeconomic Order

Feast Day: November 29th

by Elias Crim

Patron of Spanish Entrepreneurship

Saints, G.K. Chesterton once pointed out, are an antidote to whatever the age neglects. Such figures restore the world to sanity by exaggerating whatever it has overlooked. But just as Chesterton brilliantly juxtaposed St. Francis and St. Thomas, the more to underline their complementarity, so we might propose a figure (also with a cause for canonization underway) to set beside Dorothy Day. Beside her radical charity, we need a model of radical solidarity—an apostle of cooperation, to use a key term of the new economy movement.

Fr. Jose Maria Arizmendiaretta (often shortened to Arizmendi) was a Basque, as were his illustrious predecessors St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Francis Xavier. In February 1941, the young priest arrived in his new post in the town of Mondragon where the previous priest had been shot by Franco's forces. Battered by the war, Mondragon suffered from severe unemployment. Now Arizmendi had no training in business or economic matters.

But he was a close student of Catholic social thought (especially Rerum Novarum and Quadragesimo Anno), as well the writings of figures like Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier (whose work profoundly impacted Peter Maurin and by extension the Catholic Worker movement generally). Don José Maria, as he came to be called, became the chaplain of the local branch of the Catholic Action movement. He believed that the social solidarity which had been typical of Basque communities historically could be rejuvenated. In his plan for social reconstruction, the first step was technical education and then the creation of a cooperative business. By 1943, his efforts led to a new polytechnic school, a democratically-administered institution open to all young people in the region.

Importantly, the training at the school was not only technical: it was also informed by the personalism of its founder and his vision of the connection between Catholic social thought and the cooperative model, with all its

benefits for both workers and consumers, indeed, for the larger society itself.

In 1955, five graduates of the school were ready to create their first industrial cooperative, the beginning of what would become the Mondragon Corporation, today an international federation of worker cooperatives, the fourth largest enterprise operating in Spain. Today, Mondragon is an

employer of almost 70,000 worldwide, with annual sales of \$16 billion!

Amazingly, Mondragon continues to operate on ten basic cooperative principles: Open Admission, Democratic Organization, the Sovereignty of Labor, Instrumental and

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