



THE SOWER

True justice is the harvest reaped by peacemakers
from seeds sown in the spirit of peace. James, 3:18

Strangers and Guests Catholic Worker Farm, Maloy, Iowa- Number 56 Spring-Summer, 2026

***“Building connections and
encouraging the Good”***

Betsy’s report from Maloy

Our last newsletter went out in February, when the world outside was pretty bleak. The weather has changed completely and May has begun in a glorious fashion. The I.C.E. invasion of our neighbor state of Minnesota has eased, but in the world at large more and more destruction and evil spreads.

Week by week month by month we try to focus on what we can do, in the microcosm and the neighborhood, to nurture, build connections and encourage the Good. *Ora et Labora*; Pray and Work.

Weekly, we host a small bible study and I attend and contribute what I can musically at the nearest Catholic parish, St. Joseph in Mt. Ayr. Monthly I help with a relatively new local initiative of the Open Table, a Free meal for anyone, held once a month, hosted by a local congregation, prepared by all kinds of volunteers. People can come to eat and enjoy fellowship at the church or have deliveries made to them. Also monthly is gathering of local spinners, fiber people who knit, crochet, dye, felt quilt and get together to share techniques, show projects and connect with their creative siblings.

We missed the Catholic Worker National Farm gathering which was held in February. Reports indicate there is still energy lots of energy in the “back to the land” portion of the CW, in spite of so many economic and cultural forces that draw people to concentrate in cities,



Six new laying hens replenish our flock that was ravaged by a fox last Fall



Weeding the new onions

depending on artificial environments, estranged from the land that sustains us. Updates from the gathered participants ranged from one about a delegation to the occupied West Bank, a new creative collaboration, “Bridget’s Flame” a celebration of song, story, dance and silence. Many reports of new projects, outreach and collaborations from all over were shared-

sparking inspiration and encouragement.

Another role for Catholic Worker Farms is to provide a haven for folks worn down by the struggle for peace, justice and harmonious living. Lincoln Morris-Winter reflected on this role:

“I was thinking about all the anecdotes of Dorothy Day becoming overwhelmed and driving to the wilderness to find reprieve from the work of being on the interface of injustice and pain every day. I think there is something of a working metaphor there for at least one role that Catholic Worker Farms might be able to play...in offering a space for the nervous system to decompress, in offering a space for life to flourish, for people to find reprieve.”

Starting seeds, ordering seed and supplies all belongs to this part of the year. The dazzlement of the seed catalogs with promises of success, beauty, deliciousness and gadgets to ease the labor! I begin with hope for new innovations and look forward once again the delight of the garden. Starting seed is going well. besides the usual things I am participating in a garden trial of 3 varieties of basil, which should prove to be a fragrant contribution to citizen science, testing adaptability.

Outdoors, March was much less predictable! Early growth was pretty normal-early bulbs emerging, buds swelling, early birds appearing. March was also almost

‘The land belongs to Me and to Me you are only strangers and guests.’ Leviticus 25:23

without rain, although a shocking mid-March plunge into single digits burned a bunch of the early blooms and will probably cost much of the season's early fruit production. The dry spell allowed for the remaining clean-up from last year's garden to progress, although sometimes chill and wind made that a chore. Jane Uhlenkamp is again helping with garden work in anticipation of sharing the harvest, as



Sarah Fuller

she did last year. I got away to the Monastery at Clyde, MO for a short retreat in March before Brian took off for Nevada for 2 weeks, preparing for and participating on the Sacred Peace Walk during Holy Week.

April was blessed with plentiful rain, enough for the season to speed

up, although many early things had their blooms lighted. Lilly-of-the-Valley and tulips put up a good show and now some of the herbs and early things are being planted out. Brian dug, scrubbed and ground a new crop of horseradish to spice up life. Garlic and onions seem to be flourishing and some peas are up too.

Brian asked at an Amish farm we often pass where eggs are sold, whether they would be willing to sell some laying hens, and got a lead to a neighbor's farm where he was able to purchase 6, so our chicken house is tenanted again and we have fresh eggs and the chickens enjoy kitchen scraps and old milk that they enjoy so much.

Things are green and glorious now. We are eating fresh rhubarb and asparagus and planting and watering. Swallows are swooping and goats grab the juicy grass and nibble the branches that droop over their fence. We are looking forward to visitors and helpers to manage the demands of the season, and to share its pleasures as well-sitting on the porch, or eating freshly picked everything the garden has to offer.

Betsy

Post Script from Brian:

From my Advent delegation to Palestine in December until late March, I have stayed close to home in Maloy, tending the goats, making cheese, seeing to winter chores, writing and watching the signs of this dangerous, tumultuous age.

Due to an illness in their community, the "RESISTANCE AS HOPE" Lenten retreat that I had been scheduled to lead for the Mary's House Catholic Worker in Birmingham, Alabama, was canceled. I am being re-scheduled for their Advent retreat in December and if we can find someone to milk the goats, Betsy might accompany me then.

March 23 found me in Las Vegas, doing ground work for the Nevada Desert Experience's annual Sacred Peace Walk over Holy Week, a 60-mile trek from the Las Vegas strip to the gates of what they're calling now the Nevada National Security Site, the nuclear test site. This land was stolen decades ago from the Western Shoshone people and is the place on earth that has suffered the most nuclear explosions and one of the sites where the National Nuclear Security Administration, the NNSA, is working to expand the US nuclear arsenal in order to provide the president with expanded "nuclear options." On Good Friday, April 3, I was arrested with 4 friends and cited for trespass, despite the permission granted to us by the Western Shoshone. On April 27, at the end of the Midwest Catholic Worker's annual retreat and resistance, I was arrested again at another NNSA facility in Kansas City, where most of the mechanical parts of the new nuclear bombs are produced.

It has been a great privilege to walk, pray and resist in solidarity with such good folk.

Brian



photo by Hideko Otake, Brian with Anthony Donovan at the test site in Nevada

A Holy Week pilgrimage against the bomb

“I am the dance and I still go on”

Abby Rampone

April 08, 2026

Yesterday Trump said “a whole civilization will die tonight.” By midnight Eastern Standard Time, to be precise. He backtracked by early evening, but the words hang in the air...

Last week I went on the yearly Sacred Peace Walk through the Mojave Desert. It happens every Holy Week, following a tradition begun by Franciscans in the 1980s. We trekked 60 miles from Las Vegas to the Nevada National Security Site at Mercury, the most bombed land on the planet. That land legally belongs to the Western Shoshone Nation. The Department of Energy admits that nuclear testing has left four tons of plutonium — the most carcinogenic substance on earth — in the desert soil. In the 1950s, mushroom clouds were Vegas tourist attractions, like fireworks over the casinos.

On our way to the test site, we stopped at Creech Air Force Base. They train drone pilots at Creech because the Mojave resembles many Middle Eastern deserts. Worse, pilots at Creech are killing people across the world via remote control. We stood at the gate while hundreds of cars idled on the other side: workers ending their shifts, waiting in a long line before their drive home. I wore my keffiyeh and held a sign that said “HONK FOR PEACE.” That sign invites participation. If you don’t want to honk for peace, why not? Someone else held a sign that said, “Do you know who was killed today?”

On the night of Holy Thursday, a few people went to the hot springs. I’d never seen hot springs so I joined even though it took a 90-minute drive and we’d walked over 15 miles that day. We parked and walked into the dark desert. It’s chilly at night, even on the outskirts of Death Valley.

As we approached the springs we heard a choir of frogs. From what I could see, it looked like a marsh with a trail of crater-like pools. I slid into the mud, too hot to bear. After crawling away from the source of the heat, I sunk deep and looked at the Great Dipper and Orion’s Belt, the only stars I know. I wish I knew more. Everything else was black. The moon was full and I was swimming on the moon.

Then we drove back to Peace Camp, which sits across the highway from the test site. My tent had pancaked in the winds of the high desert. It was after midnight. I struggled with the poles but the tent wasn’t sturdy enough. Exhausted, I dragged out my sleeping mat and bag, cocooned myself, and slid into sleep on the contaminated earth. I woke to drumming at dawn: the Shoshone sunrise ceremony that greeted us each dawn that week. It was Good Friday.

That afternoon we walked the Stations of the Cross along the test site fence. We held up photographs of a crucified world. The Stations of the Cross tell the story of Christ’s Passion, his journey to death on the cross. One of the Stations is “Christ is stripped of his garments.” At that Station, someone held the 1972 photograph known as “Napalm Girl.” Vietnamese children

run toward the camera, fleeing a napalm strike on their village. In the foreground, a child’s mouth is gaping like a tragedy mask. At the center of the photograph is a naked child, a nine-year-old girl who tore away her burning clothes. I cried.

Easter is the story of life after death. Jesus was brutally executed. That’s why Catholics have macabre art: God was tortured in a human body.

Christians believe that he was fully God and fully man, the apparent paradox at the root of our theology. We



“Peace Like a River” Abby leaving her mark on the tunnel under Hwy 95 between Peace Camp and the nuclear test site

“A Holy Week pilgrimage” continued on page 7

**DOROTHY DAY
AND
THE WOODSTOCK GENERATION**

Brian Terrell

The political and cultural commentator David Brooks is not alone when he suggests in his 2015 book, *The Road to Character*, that Catholic Worker co-founder Dorothy Day's life was a protest "against the values of the Woodstock counterculture the media was prone to celebrate." For some of Day's most ardent admirers in the years since her death in 1980, she is held to be the very antithesis of what has been called the Woodstock Generation.

Day's relationship to that culture and to the actual rock festival that lent it its name was more nuanced, however. The Catholic Worker farm at Tivoli, New York, where Day spent much of her time in those years, was not far away from Max Yasgur's farm in Bethel where the Woodstock festival actually occurred. On August 16, 1969, Day recorded in her diary, "Story in Times about Rock Festival at Bethel (Woodstock), most favorable. 'A well-behaved half million young people.' All farm teenagers went." Two days later she reported "Mary, Maggie, Martha (Day's granddaughter) Adrian and all the other teenagers back from Rock Festival. They had a weekend of rain. Sounded like a nightmare to me."



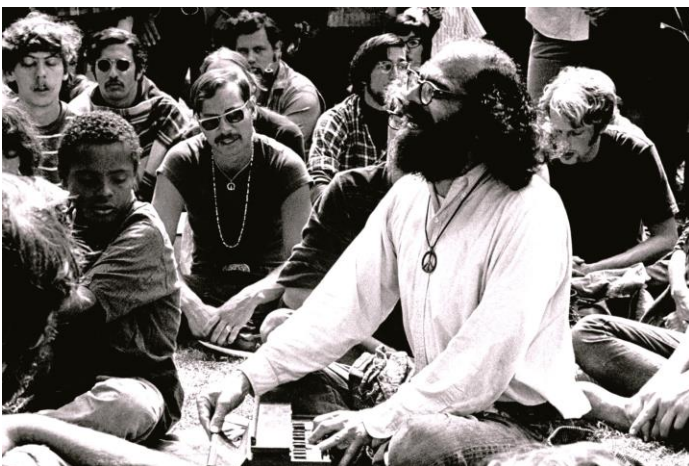
Joan Baez...."Yes, the world will be saved by such beauty, such courage!"

If a weekend of rain, mud and rock music with a half million kids, no matter how well behaved, sounded like a nightmare to a septuagenarian in 1969, Day was by no means making a moral judgement. On a Sunday in October that year, Day wrote in her diary a critique of the sermon she heard in the Catholic parish church in Tivoli: "A good sermon but ending with condemnation and ill-concealed disgust at the youth, 'orgy of sex and drugs' at Bethel. No compassion for the young."

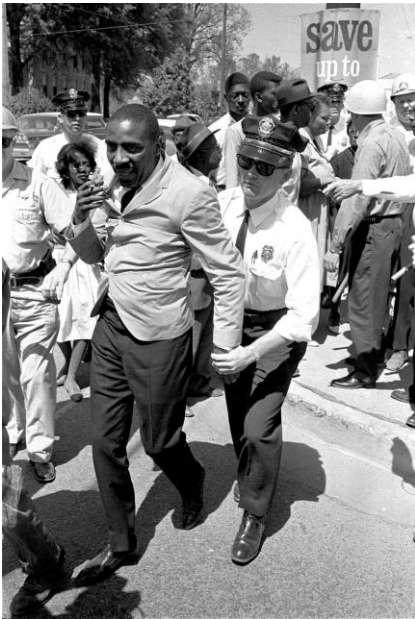
Day greatly admired folk singer Joan Baez, who was the final act of the first day of the Woodstock Rock Festival, and considered her a friend. In 1973, writing in her regular column in *The Catholic Worker* newspaper of Baez' visit to North Vietnam, Day said, "Yes, the world will be saved by such beauty, such courage! She stood on a balcony in Hanoi and sang to the people in the midst of this inhuman war."

Day's diary recorded a visit from the famed beat poet Allen Ginsberg, who lived in the same lower east side neighborhood as the Catholic Worker when he was not in Woodstock- "Allen Ginsburg came in tonight with Gary. Attended Vespers. Ten in the dining room sang mantras, some of which involved us all- Hare Krishna went into Jesus, Mary, then Virgin Mary, then a litany asking for prayers for all... We've all sung better since he was here. I mean the hymn to the Blessed Mother at the end of vespers."

If Day famously insisted that she did not want to be called a saint, she did not hesitate to apply that title to the popular comedian and Black activist of that generation Dick Gregory, whom she called "a brave and courageous spirit" and "a saint of our times." Day took notice in her column, too, that the ground breaking, many times arrest-



Allen Ginsburg attended Vespers- "Hare Krishna went into Jesus, Mary, then Virgin Mary, then a litany asking for prayers for all... We've all sung better since he was here."



Dick Gregory...“a brave and courageous spirit” and “a saint of our times.”

ed for obscenity, comedian Lenny Bruce “said once (the Catholic Church) was the only THE Church in America!” It is said that she was amused when Abbie Hoffman called her the original hippie.

Day did not idealize the younger generation, though, and her disapprovals are amply catalogued elsewhere. It is reasonable to imagine, even, that she would share some of David Brook’s criticism of

“the antinomianism, the intense focus on the liberated individual and ‘doing your own thing’” that marked the Woodstock counterculture. Her stronger criticisms, though, were reserved for the Catholic Church which she also loved: “I feel that over and over again in history the Church has become so corrupt that it just cries out to heaven for justice,” she said in an interview in *The National Catholic Reporter* in 1970. “I think that it is the result of the corruption of the institutional church, through money and through their acceptance of this lousy, rotten system.”

In a 1998 article by Paul Elie in *The New York Times*, Francis Cardinal George, archbishop of Chicago, who also strangely insisted “remember, Dorothy Day did not turn her criticism of the social order on the church,” confessed that “It’s the Catholic Worker now that I’m worried about. At the end of her life she said, ‘They’ve turned day into night,’ and I fear she was right.” This has been repeated in various forms by scholars, bishops, even by some who identify with the Catholic Worker movement and it has come to be accepted as true by many.

Responding to William Miller about his 1973 book, *A harsh and dreadful love; Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement*, Day wrote “and it is a valid criticism, I think, that you put too much emphasis on me and disregard all the wonderful and exciting young people all over

the country who do the work while I go around and make speeches.”

Later as her health was failing, in letters to old friends and in entries to her diary, Day did vent her frustrations over her younger co-workers, her fears for them, sometimes expressing desolation over them, even. She also berated herself for being so judgmental and she sometimes sought reconciliation with those she had criticized or spurned. “Judge not” was her frequent reminder to herself. Day’s declining years were not an easy retirement for her and she often complained of feeling useless, “on the shelf” as she put it. About the various accolades that came her way in those years she said, “How one dreads such honors when inactive, and a group of dedicated young women bearing the brunt of all the work. One feels like a figure-head.” In another letter, Day confessed, “With everyone else taking responsibility, and having taken it for so long, bearing so much, I feel like an utter failure- wrung dry.”



Abby Hoffman, called Dorothy Day “the original hippie”

I came to the Catholic Worker in 1975, when I was 19 years old and Day was 78 and this was shortly before her first heart attack. I would like to think that I was numbered among the “attractive (physically and mentally) crowd here now in the First and Third Street houses” Day praised in her January 1979 column in *The Catholic Worker*, but the one time that I was mentioned in her column by name was in June 1978- “I rejoice to see the young people thinking of ‘the works of mercy’ as a truly revolutionary, but nonviolent program. The spiritual and corporal certainly go together, and often involve suffering. To oppose nuclear buildup has led to the imprisonment this last

month of two of our workers, Robert Ellsberg and Brian Terrell, in Rocky Flats, Colorado... Meanwhile, I am confined in another way by weakness and age, but can truly pray with fervor for those on active duty, and sternly suppress my envy at the activities of our young and valiant workers.”

Deliberate or not, putting Day at odds with the movement as it was in her later years effectively dismisses most of the contemporary movement as well. Dr. Larry Chapp, one contemporary scholar of the movement, wrote in a *National Catholic Register* article, “Sadly, the Catholic Worker movement (Day) created, along with Peter Maurin, has for the most part departed from this deeply Catholic vision and has embraced instead modern, leftist social ideology.” The same scholar, in a *Catholic Answers* podcast, also claimed that “a lot of people look askance at the contemporary Catholic Worker movement because I mean to be blunt, there are strong elements in the contemporary movement that have simply degenerated into leftist sort of ooey goeey politics, the latest cause de jour and so on,” as if the “latest cause de jour,” the pressing issues of

our times, did not concern and motivate Day and Maurin and the movement they founded from the first issue of their newspaper launched at a labor rally on May Day, 1933, to the present time.

It is this perspective that allows many of Day’s most ardent and pious devotees today to love “Saint Dorothy” without being challenged by her urgent call to “overthrow” what she called “this rotten, decadent, putrid industrial capitalist system which breeds such suffering” and that at this present moment threatens the lives of all of God’s creatures on this planet.

Dan McKanan in his book *The Catholic Worker After Dorothy*, 2008, suggested that “what Dorothy Day experienced as a generation gap was, for the younger generation, a remarkable experience of generational continuity.” This has been my experience over the past 50 years. Now that I am almost as old as Dorothy was when I met her, I experience that generational continuity in my friendships and collaborations with many younger Catholic Workers. I thank God for these friends and for the hope against hope that they give that sustains me in times such as these.



Dorothy Day, Frank Donovan and Brian, 3rd Street and 2nd Avenue, New York City, April 1978
photo by Stanley Vishnewski

If you missed WOODSTOCK, it’s not too late to celebrate the summer solstice and the feast of St John Baptist with us in the remote and colorful town of Maloy, Iowa, on **Saturday, June 20.**

Festivities begin about 4 pm in the Maloy City Park at the center of town. At about 6 we will have a pot luck supper in the park, featuring the first fruits of our gardens, fields and pastures. After supper there will be folk dancing in the park until dusk, followed by a bonfire in our orchard, more food and drink and music. Bring friends, bring some food or drink to share if you wish (there is always enough) musical instruments, lawn chairs. There is room to tent if you want to stay the night, room to sleep on our floor and we can try to arrange for a bed for anyone who needs one. Children welcome, of course. Please let us know if you're coming, especially if you are planning on staying the night.



A Holy Week Pilgrimage

continued from page 3

believe that each person was made in the image and likeness God, and through Christ, God is in each of us. We teach that anything you do to another person is also done to Christ. Jesus died the most terrible death, like people sacrificed to the bomb or the electric chair. After three days he rose again to new life, like the flowers and cacti and hares and lizards in that once-desecrated desert. In “The Lord of the Dance,” a song for this season, the line goes: “They buried my body and they thought I’d gone/But I am the dance and I still go on.”



To me there is nothing more real than walking the land with other humans. It is what we call communion. When you go to the desert together, you cannot glaze over the horror of 165 Iranian girls and teachers murdered at school. You cannot imagine yourself separate from them, dismiss “another war in the Middle East” as if it were not done in your name, against your own flesh and blood. So at Creech, some of our group blocked the road to the base and police snapped handcuffs on their wrists. (A piece about the action appeared in the *Las Vegas Review Journal*.)

The group included Catholic Workers, Western Shoshone, Veterans for Peace, and Pax Christi members; Quakers, atheists, Lutherans, Muslims, and Episcopalians. Some people had recently returned from a solidarity trip to



the West Bank. Some came with just a few bucks in their pockets. Some came to walk their own land, inviting the rest of us to join them. We got to know each other at scrappy roadside picnics and around a camping stove. I tend not to romanticize community anymore — a week-long gathering isn’t so hard because you all go home at the end — but they were the companions I needed in my bones. How could humanity have survived the last 81 years of a nuclear age, if not for God with us and in us? My friend said he’s convinced that none of us would be alive if not for the anti-nuclear movement. It’s the same thing.

On the first day of the walk, Palm Sunday, we held a “die-in” on Fremont Street, a Vegas colonnade home to street performers like Elmo and a “nun” with her boobs out. A die-in is an action in which protesters simulate death. I laid on the ground and stared at the lofty LED ceiling. Indoor zip-liners shot over like missiles. My friend saw a few passersby look at our bodies and start to cry. A DJ watched and blared music down the street. When our deaths were over and it was time to stand up, we started to dance.

Originally published in Abby’s substack, Love in Community

Photos by Hideko Otake



Abby, on the right, arrested at Creech AFB

THE SOWER

Strangers and Guests

Catholic Worker Farm

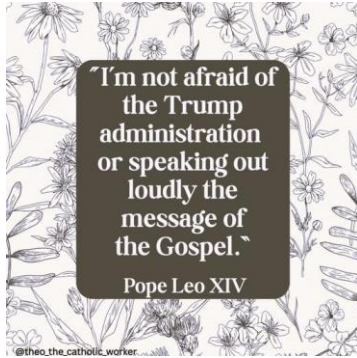
108 Hillcrest Drive

Maloy, Iowa 50836

641-785-2321, Brian's cell: 773-853-1886

Brian: brian1956terrell@gmail.com

Betsy: keenanweaving@yahoo.com



Enough of the idolatry of self and money! Enough of the display of power! Enough of war! True strength is shown in serving life...Dear brothers and sisters, there are certainly binding responsibilities that fall to the leaders of nations. To them we cry out: Stop! It is time for peace!... Yet there is a no less significant responsibility that falls to all of us—men and women from all over the world. We are an immense multitude that rejects war not only in word, but also in deed...Let us believe once again in love, moderation and good politics. We must form ourselves and get personally involved, each following our own calling. Everyone has a place in the mosaic of peace! Pope Leo XIV, April 11, 2026

Report from the Midwest Catholic Workers' Retreat and Resistance, April 24-27, 2026 in Kansas City by Mike Miles, Anathoth CW Farm, Luck, Wisconsin



"Perhaps one of the most epic resistance actions I've taken part of in 50 years of doing this work, thanks to the weather. None of us blew over the rainbow as the tornados warned of by the sirens wailing at us in the early morning darkness never materialized. We were drenched and freezing but after weighing our comfort against the threat of looming nuclear annihilation we held our ground.

"Over \$1 trillion of the public treasury is being spent to make hydrogen bombs 'safer and more usable'. Threats to obliterate ancient civilizations are being made by the US oligarchy. Even our

arresting officers appreciated our steadfastness. 9 of us were cited with trespass and are ready to put the system on trial, yet again, if given the opportunity. If we are nothing but 'fools for Christ'(1 Corinthians 4:10) so be it."

Photo by Kristin Scheer