



# St. Francis / St. Joseph Catholic Worker

Christmas 2007

◆ P.O. Box 14274 ◆ Cincinnati, Ohio 45250 ◆ 1437 Walnut Street ◆ (513) 381-4941 ◆

## Diner-On-Elm: Reflection of a Thankful resident

As a 1982 graduate of the University of Houston with a degree in civil engineering, Abdul Amir Fealzadeh never expected to be homeless on the streets of Cincinnati. Amir had already accomplished so much since his 1977 immigration from Iran.



Yet with the economic conditions of the times, and his poor English skills, Amir found it very difficult to get a job. He settled for work as a busboy at a TGIF, but he didn't feel settled. He then turned to cocaine and its downhill course.

Amir struggled with his addiction and by 1985, fought off his habit, changed his lifestyle, and married. Un-

fortunately, in 1991, Amir got back on drugs. His wife and son left him and within a few years Amir found himself completely downhill, now a street person.

In 2002, Amir says he had a truly religious experience: he saw himself in the window of a totally abandoned building and this question went to the core of his being: "Is that man you?"

"No future, no family, nothing; I just cried and cried and cried," he stated. From 2002 to 2003, Amir stayed at the

Catholic Worker House on three different occasions. Leaving in 2003, he got an apartment and ran a booth at the Flea Markets. In 2004, he reconciled with his wife and son and received his citizenship. By 2005, Amir had opened an Islamic Center and purchased a restaurant on the northwest corner of Garfield & Elm.

Abdul Amir Fealzadeh's restaurant is Marrakech: DINER-ON-ELM (10:00am to 9:00 pm, Mon.-Sat.). The gyro sandwiches are tops. The big statement that Amir makes is: **"Before, I would help no one who was homeless or down and out. But today, I will help anyone because I was there. I really owe my life to the St. Francis/St. Joseph Catholic Worker House."**

The Staff of the SFSJ House





## Greater Cincinnati Foundation Grants the House a Facelift

The St. Francis/St. Joseph Catholic Worker House is keeping its good looks thanks to a grant awarded to us by The Greater Cincinnati Foundation. The \$10,400 grant was specified for the purpose of scraping and painting of the exterior of our Walnut Street house as well as the installation of a commercial garbage disposal with a new sink. The disposal will greatly facilitate our soup kitchen service and our communal meals.

Additionally, the Franciscans of the Province of St. John the Baptist donated \$1,000 to aid the project and Dr. Brennan Hill contributed \$700 from lecture stipends.

The paint and disposal were so much needed that we are truly indebted to the Foundation, the Province and Dr. Hill. We also appreciate the recognition of our mission and give much thanks to all of our benefactors. The projects will be completed by our December 15 Christmas party.



## Special Thanks

Special Thanks to Bob Brandy of Brandy Meats for donating meats twice a week for the evening meals at the Catholic Worker House for the past eighteen months. This has been a tremendous help in keeping the cost of our meals reasonable. Bob has been in business since 1978 and is located at 2853 Sidney Ave, Cincinnati, OH (Camp Washington Area). **Thanks much, Bob!**

## Saving Money.... And the Cincinnati Credit Union

About 12 years ago, we initiated a policy that our guests not only had to be actively seeking a job but also must open a savings account. The Cincinnati Credit Union which serves the neighborhood and is a much needed service offers savings accounts for a fee of \$5.00.

The men who stay with us must save a minimum of two thirds of their take home pay – it's an attainable goal and easily measurable.

Our staff has heard innumerable times residents say during exit interviews, "I didn't realize that I could save money."

In July of this year, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. estimated that 28 million people in the U.S. do not have an account at an insured financial institution. So many are using check cashing centers and other means of payments whereby the fees and interest rates can be extremely high. The savings program that we have established continues to be successful and most beneficial.



"Speak the truth as if you had a thousand voices.  
It is silence that kills the world."

..... St. Catherine of Siena

## Waste Not: "Hot" Soup Kitchen

As the cold moved in on November 13, we started the INSIDE (the house) soup kitchen with hot soup and a sandwich at lunch on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 11:00 to 1:00 p.m. Our walkup window is now shut for the season. The kitchen averages between 110 and 120 persons a session. Our service coordinates with the other soup kitchens in the area and is open to all.

Did you know that researchers and governments are searching for ways to reduce the "environmental impact" of *two million tons* of food Ohioans send to landfills every year?

The Hunger Summit in Cincinnati reports that 160,000 people line up at soup kitchens and food pantries in the 20 counties around Cincinnati. **But at the same time, Ohio** is spending One million dollars on more creative ways to throw food away, such as composting machines to turn food scraps into methane for energy.

(Source: David Wells, *Cincinnati Enquirer*)

## Think Food-stamps Satisfy Hunger?

A social worker thought she knew about poverty and hunger and was sensitive to the needs of the poor because of her job. But recently she found a whole new awareness when she put a small part of herself in the shoes of the poor for seven days. "She fed herself for an entire week on just \$21, the national average that a person gets in food stamps," the Cincinnati Enquirer reported. We suggest that you try this yourself and extend it to a budget of \$84 for 30 days. It simply is not easy.



## You're Invited ! **ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY** Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup> 6:30 P.M.

All are invited to Christmas Dinner with music and songs led by Tom Billman, volunteer for the House, and other members of the *Terra Azul* band (Terra Azul means "Blue Earth" in both Spanish and Portuguese).

It's always a great time. The Spirit is always with us at this party & we hope that you will be, too!



Don't throw a whole  
life away – just  
because it has been  
damaged up  
a little.

....From the  
movie: **Seabiscuit**

## We Continue Our Good Work...

For 2007 through Octo-  
ber, The St. Francis/St.  
Joseph Catholic Worker  
House served 180 home-  
less men and 65 went  
onto  
independent living with a  
job, which represents a  
36% achievement. This  
exceeds by far the  
national average for a  
shelter such as ours.

We need to discover  
the root causes of  
success  
Rather than the root  
causes  
of failure.

.... *David Cooperrider*

Darkness cannot drive out darkness;  
only light can do that,  
Hate cannot drive out hate;  
only Love can do that.

..... *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*



We have been blessed with a jewel to go  
with our new paint job. A new sign  
designed by the graduates of the SFSJ  
Catholic Worker House, Charley's 3/4  
House, and the art class of St. Ursula  
Academy graces our House. We thank  
them and the women of the Sarah Center  
who painted the frame.



# Dorothy Day .....by Brennan R. Hill

Who lives by the sword, dies by the sword.

Dorothy Day still stands as our role model for living the gospel of Jesus. So often she took gospel stands which brought her persecution, but she refused to back down.

When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1935, the Catholic press staunchly supported Franco because his Communist opponents were persecuting the Church. Dorothy was aware of Franco's strong links to Hitler and Fascism, and her commitment to the gospel held her back from supporting Franco or the extreme violence from both sides. She saw all the Spanish as brothers and sisters and prayed that they would all reject violence. Dorothy had to pay dearly for her pacifist position: subscriptions to her newspaper, *The Catholic Worker*, dropped by 100,000 and she came under severe attack by Church officials and politicians.

Dorothy took the most heat from her opposition to America entering into World War II. Dorothy recognized the dangers of Hitler and believed that he could have been stopped before he overran Europe. She decided to demonstrate against the American Nazi Party (the Bund), which held a rally in Madison Square Garden (yes, held in NYC in Feb 1939 with 20,000 attending) For that she was thrown in jail!

After Pearl Harbor, Dorothy stood nearly alone in opposing World War II because she believed revenge and

violence only lead to more killing. Her protests again landed her in jail, but she never backed down on her commitment to non-violence. She rejected the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and was deeply grieved at the war's ending to see that 40 million people had been killed and countless others wounded.

Things haven't changed much for advocates of Jesus' teaching on non-violence. Gandhi and Martin Luther King were both assassinated. Cesar

Chavez was beaten and imprisoned. Recently the Thomas Merton Center, an organization dedicated to peace, discovered that it had been investigated by the FBI. The Bureau's documents described the Center as "a left wing organization advocating, among other political causes, *pacifism*." The Office of Inspector General recently reported to Congress that it has had under surveillance groups dedicated to peace, the environment and cruelty to animals. Seems like the folks dedicated to the gospels these days are often put in the same category as terrorists!

The spirit of Dorothy Day still lives on, especially in the shelters and soup kitchens named after her. We are dedicated to non-violence and compassion for the poor. As the sign says outside our house: Support the troops. End the War!



*Milwaukee Journal,  
February 1968*

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Mark C. Schmieder**

**Brennan Hill**

**Joyce Kiernan**

**Michael Harmon**

**Arlene Turner**

**House Manager:**

**Karl Fields**

## **OUR MISSION**

St. Francis/St. Joseph House of Hospitality strives to provide hospitality to homeless men. We recognize that God created each human being with great dignity and respect.

The community of those of us who live and work at St. Francis/St. Joseph House of Hospitality desire to uphold this principle and to serve our guests accordingly.

*(Rev. 12/11/98)*

Dorothy Day,  
UPI,  
February 9,  
1917



## **CW House Needs**

We can always use donations of coffee, sugar, powder creamer, condiments, paper towels, toilet paper.

**Non-Profit**  
**U.S. Postage**  
**PAID**  
**Cincinnati,**  
**OH**  
**Permit No.**  
**4039**



Saint Francis/St. Joseph C.W. House  
P.O. Box 14274  
Cincinnati, OH 45250