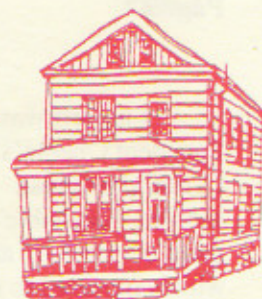


# TROUBADOUR

The Newsletter of St. Francis House, New London, Connecticut



Center Section: TEN YEARS AND A GARDEN

2010 RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP COURSE – JUNE 20-26

Christmas 2009

Volume 11, No. 2

+++++

## THE TEACHABLE MOMENT?

### A New Year's Reflection

Anne P. Scheibner

That phrase "the teachable moment" is one I remember over the years from various articles and conversations focused either on classroom education or parenting. It served to articulate that moment of recognition by a heretofore recalcitrant or at least disinterested student or child of something new. Or perhaps more accurately it served to identify something newly recognized because the context shifted and provided a different framework for recognizing the subject in a memorable light.

To be ready for that moment in the midst of the regular repetitions of daily life requires being fully in the present – not tied to the patterns of just before or just after. Daily morning prayer at St. Francis House which begins with five minutes of centering silence is one way that we practice breaking the habit of automatic action and response and making ourselves truly available to each other, our neighbors and the opportunities that come with each new day.

Emmett's cancer which was diagnosed last December has provided a year's worth of teachable moments for me because it changed everything about our daily lives and routines. First, there was the time of surgery at Yale-New Haven followed by the six months of chemo-therapy while we were based in Stonington. Cancer like baptism is a transforming framework. Once I put aside the fear of losing the most formative force in patterning my present daily life - i.e. my partner in marriage and in our work at St. Francis House - I was free to engage in new moments of recognizing and enjoying our life together. I told Emmett that this was the first time in our twenty-five years of marriage that we had been a "normal American couple." He said, "Because you're waiting on me?" And I laughed because I really hadn't been thinking about that part, but about how the life-giving but nonetheless numerous, unscheduled and in that sense round the clock demands of "the open door" of rectory life and then life at St. Francis House has shaped our life as a couple.

During our time in Stonington Dr. Henry Louis Gates had a different memorable experience of life in his home. I started thinking about this article on the "Teachable Moment" after reading Bob Herbert's *New York Times* Op Ed piece on August 1 which pulled me up short. How had I missed the fact that the elapsed time between the phone call to alert Cambridge police about a possible break-in and the snapping of handcuffs on Dr. Gates' wrists was 5-6 minutes? It took me ten times five minutes fourteen years ago to read Dr. Gates brilliant essay on the O.J. Simpson verdict *13 Ways of Looking at a Black Man* which first appeared in the *New Yorker* in October, 1995. There Dr. Gates reflects in detail about the Driving While Black experience as well as offering a perceptive analysis of why Black and white people reacted so differently viscerally to the announcement of the not guilty verdict in the O.J. Simpson trial. So would not this be another "teachable moment" on the meaning of race in this society?



I myself was astonished but delighted by President Obama's candid reaction to the Cambridge arrest. I was therefore dismayed to see that "teachable moment" disappear in the foam of publicity around the "beer summit" which appeared to reduce analyzing the racial dynamics and meaning of what happened between Dr. Gates and Sgt. Crowley to a matter of reconciling two individuals with two different views of what happened in Dr. Gates' kitchen.

Another kind of teachable moment on the national scene appeared with the President's order to increase by 30,000 souls the number of Americans in Afghanistan and the border with Pakistan. I've certainly heard some persuasive arguments about not equating Viet Nam and Afghanistan. After all, Pakistan has nuclear weapons. So I all the more mourned the loss of the opportunity to say that this country is no longer interested in military interventions around the world as a primary means of foreign policy. What I learned was that at least on the national level the basic framework of perception and action has not changed. Why not?

Last month a group of five of us from SE Connecticut attended a conference on economic conversion at the University of Connecticut reinaugurating a public conversation which has been dormant for some 20 years. Can we reinvent a peacetime economy based on sustainable practices and personal skills? From whence will come that commitment and imagination to transform the *underlying* economic and political framework?

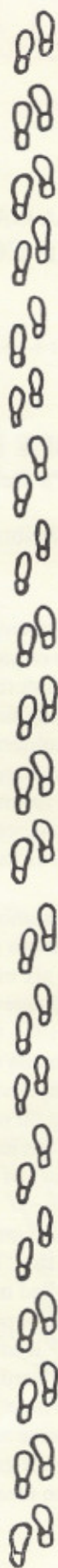
Recently I heard a twenty-two year old woman ask the Stonington Planning and Zoning Commission to allow the construction of a shopping mall, 48 townhouses and hotel on 35 acres of what was the Perkins Farm. What was compelling and distressing about her appeal was her conclusion that her high school classmates have moved away from the area because of a lack of affordable housing, job opportunities and a sense that this area is boring - without its own young adult shopping and hang-out scene. Twittering and cell phones are more real than woodlands which after all as one of the supporters of the development proposal said are "vacant." Her thought was to use the moment to teach a room full of predominantly grey-headed elders that we needed to make room for

the next generation. I struggled but could not find a way to say to her that perhaps we needed to reinvent both housing and work in a way that would not require hundreds of parking places in a former Connecticut cow pasture.

Of course, our present state economy dependent as it is on defense, gambling and tourism replaced the one based on small scale manufacturing and that replaced the one based on agriculture and "the home" as the center of both family and economic life. And perhaps it is past due time for those of us of European, African and Asian ancestries to understand the life lived by Native peoples in these watersheds. Work there was, but not jobs. Work there is now, but not jobs. Can we just do it?

So perhaps some New Year's resolutions around "Teachable Moments" are in order. I certainly don't wish for any of you the kind of crisis opportunity provided by Emmett's cancer. But especially in the light of the recent financial and economic meltdowns, each of us could be more intentional about allowing time and space to question our own day to day practices in this New Year. We cannot just hope that President Obama will articulate those moments for us or fear that FOX News will do it for everyone else. Can you find someone or a group to reflect on what those moments reveal?

What if people in every local faith community saw this coming year as the opportunity to have local teach-in's on the meaning of peace and justice within our various traditions? Can we figure out how we as ordinary citizens and people of faith can undo the apparent triumph of what President Eisenhower warned us against - namely the unchecked power and influence of a technological elite and the (at that time newly formed) military-industrial complex? Then President Eisenhower's other statement would be true: "I think that people want peace so much that one of these days government had better get out of their way and let them have it." Maybe the change we need needs to start locally. And President Obama would have had some much needed support in picking up that Nobel Peace Prize.







## FRIDAY NIGHT MEETINGS FOR CLARIFICATION OF THOUGHT

### *THEME: THE DISCIPLESHIP COMMUNITY*

Reflections led by members of the Community

Winter-Spring 2010

<b>February 12</b>	Introduction & The Beatitudes Character and destiny of the disciples	Matthew 5:3-12
<b>February 26</b>	Salt and Light The discipleship community	Matthew 5:13-16
<b>March 12</b>	"The Law," Part I The community's way of life	Matthew 5:17-32
<b>March 26</b>	"The Law," Part II The community's way of life, cont'd.	Matthew 5:33-48
<b>April 9</b>	"Temple Service" Community disciplines: prayer, fasting, almsgiving	Matthew 6:1-18
<b>April 23</b>	Authentic Justice, Part I God or Mammon?	Matthew 6:19-7:5
<b>May 7</b>	Authentic Justice, Part II The Golden Rule	Matthew 7:6-12
<b>May 21</b>	Conclusion Two Ways, two harvests, two builders	Matthew 7:13-29

*Friday night schedule: 5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer; 6:00 p.m. Supper;  
7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Conversation*



# RESPONSE TO "TWO FAVORS"

We have all been heartened and sustained by the letters, e-mails in response to Sarah's Updates during the hospital stay, notes, food by those of you near enough to do it and the ongoing prayers from all of you near and far.

Emmett finished the chemo in August and we returned to St. Francis House in September. Anne was ready to go on vacation, but Emmett was clearly ready to get back to work even while trying to build up his strength through continuing moderation in activity and more rest time than usual.

Emmett plans to go on the 30 day Ignation Retreat in Gloucester which he has long desired to do and now, God willing, he will do it starting on January 5. Anne may finally get some rest, too, but we shall see! So the next *Troubadour* will very likely see further reflections on the themes engaged in the "Two Favors" excerpts from his journal which we published last June.

In the meantime we would like to share here some of the many responses to the June *Troubadour*. Our thanks to all of you for your ongoing prayers and support:

My dearest friend Father Emmett:

The *Troubadour* is #1 in my book. Its arrival always feels like an invitation. The core of me has been listening for a word from God trying to have acceptance and meaning to your cancer. My prayers are with you and family. It's gratifying reading through "Two Favors" from *The Cancer Journal*. I was seventeen when my mother died from breast cancer. I recently attended the annual walk for breast cancer held here by an outside organization. Your inquiries as to whether you should make your petition to God in regards to the Two Favors was so Franciscan as I stated I held my own seeking answers on your behalf. I know your offering of suffering isn't in vain. Your reference to "gardening in the 19 by 21 foot = 400 square feet a big garden" lets me know with bold confidence God is doing His own spiritual planting in you. I do see the continuance of your flair to furthering God's Kingdom here on earth.



Nate and Zuli brought you and Anne shrimp etouffee for supper – Yum!.....

Sincerely, Marina Mills

P.S. Nate and Zuli's wedding picture which includes Aunt Dorrie is breathtaking. Like walking on the Red Carpet. Give my best to Sarah, Anne, Nate, Aunt Dorrie, Zuli and tell Ken Leech to mention me in his prayers. Most of all Jesus loves you and so do I.



Dear Emmett,

The *Troubadour* just arrived, filling in the picture of your recent illness, surgery, and recuperation. The journal entries capture an otherwise hidden aspect of the situation. I grew up within a long walk's distance of a Franciscan monastery, Duns Scotus, on the outskirts of Detroit. The monastery, I now realize, was but one building or complex among many made possible by sudden industrial wealth.

The Franciscans gave me access to their beautiful library. The room was very middle ages in feel, as was the complex as a whole. Now I wonder at the architect's ability to establish the other-worldly atmosphere so capably.

A side altar in the church was devoted to the suffering of Christ, and all was brought back vividly by the journal you kept. Interesting material for spiritual thought, yet I had not entertained it for a long time.

I write to express concern and compassion – you have shown both in ways that will persist in New London, and elsewhere.

Helen and I want to express our hope for your recovery, and your resourcefulness in the spiritual side of your quest. Sincerely, Jim Coleman, Norwich, CT



Dear Emmett,

I've only met and talked to you once, when you and I were at St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, learning about Centering Prayer from Thomas Keating. We were in the same discussion group and you told me about plans for St. Francis House. I think I remember that you were still in Atlanta at that time. We and a couple of other people did a little hiking in the thin air of those wonderful mountains.

I've sent a pittance to St. Francis House most years so I could continue to receive the *Troubadour* and read about the things you do that I'm scared to do and don't know how to do. I've just finished reading your *Cancer Journal* in the latest issue and felt moved to thank you for sharing your thoughts about suffering and dying.

I am now seventy-five years old. My dearly loved husband is eighty-four. And it just dawned on me about a year ago that both of us are going to die and that there is not a thing I can do to keep us alive and being a control freak won't help at all. It's an amazing realization! As you said, death had always been an abstract notion to me, and not it's not abstract any more. And will get more real day by day. Also as you said, the uncertainty of when, where, and how makes it harder to live with.

So I'm writing to thank you for letting me know that you, and other people, too, are living with this strange recognition of death. I'm not where you are on the spiritual journey; I don't even know where I am on the journey; but it's good not to be alone.

I enclose another little pittance for your work and so you'll keep sending us the *Troubadour*. Blessings on your work and your writing and thinking, and thanks for telling me about suffering.

Peace, Carroll Young, Nashville, TN



Dearest Emmett,

Elizabeth and I have read the latest *Troubadour* again and again, moved by your profound meditation on your illness and the way in which, by God's grace, you have been able to enter more deeply into the mystery of redemption. What you wrote, what you pray, and what you live illumines our common struggle in ways that I can scarce relate, let alone explain.

I need not tell you, I hope, that you and Anne are in our prayers daily. May you come to know the height, and depth, and breadth of God's love, may the healing balm of God's mercy surround and sustain you, so that you may be filled with joy and continue to be a living sign of the new world that even now is being born among us. With all our love,

John and Elizabeth Orens  
Washington, DC



Dear Emmett,

After single read during my evening meditation: Thank you for sharing your journal, and especially your process around the two favors. First, I was overwhelmed by the power and impact of (committed? devoted? Love-filled?) community. Having so many to support your discernment must please God, no? That you and we take this inside and take it so seriously. And also, I was moved to tears by the "summary wisdom." There is a wonderful and persuasive "weight" to your thinking plus/ interacting with ours.

Finally – to paraphrase one of the great poets who said that reading good poetry inspires you to write poetry – your journal excerpt moved me to think that I may have something to say about some things. I've consciously resisted the "cancer memoir" as a genre, but what you've done is so much deeper and wider than that!! Again- thank you for what you've shaped and offered from your experience. More – in some form or another – soon -

Love, Linda Powell Pruitt  
Richmond, VA



## VICTORY HOUSE VISIONS

by Paul Jakoboski

Wendy and I moved into Victory House in May. A lot about the life of the House can be seen in how events unfolded in one recent 72 hour period.

On Friday night December 18 we had a community dinner with thirteen of us gathered around the conference table at Victory House. All eleven members of the resident St. Francis House community brought festive food to share. Bob was in Alaska so he was absent, but former House residents Ben Parent and children Gabriel and Madeline (now 3 and 5) were reunited with "Big Brothers" Henri and Max, Bienvenida's now teen age sons. It was Emmett's 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of ordination so we toasted him as well. Trimming Aunt Dorrie's Christmas tree in the conference room area outside her door and setting up the African and Bethlehem crèches on the mantelpiece were interrupted by the arrival outside our doorstep by choirmaster Kit Johnson and more than a dozen carolers from our neighbors at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Congregation. We crowded out onto the porch and joined them in a rousing chorus of "O Come All Ye Faithful." Wendy spent years in the Connecticut town of Coventry and this was the first time she ever had experienced carolers!

Late in the afternoon next day of a rather uneventful Saturday I found myself sitting around the conference table with Aunt Dorrie and Anne setting up a production line to process a direct mailing, the St. Francis House annual appeal letter. Anne, as usual, trying to combine past experience with current talent, set up the various stations and tasks. We got into the flow and began having output by four forty five with just the three of us.

Soon Bienvenida stopped by with a meal for Aunt Dorrie briefly interrupting the production, but then both she and Wendy joined us and the line continued its output. Again others began to pop in, first Max and Henri then Nate and later Emmett.

Altogether nine of us working in sync were making short work of the more than 1300 envelopes being readied for the post office. Every once in a while Max, or Henri would jump up to see if the great snow storm predicted



by the weather forecasters had begun yet. Although predicted to start at five p.m. we had pretty much finished most of the mailing by seven without a snowflake, much to the disappointment of the boys.

When Wendy and I moved to New London one of the side benefits we thought would be the more mild winters. So we were chagrined to find the first snowstorm of the year to hit the hardest in New London with close to two feet of snow. Sunday morning came with the first light showing the weather forecasters had been more right than wrong. The storm was winding down by sunrise, but through the morning lights it was clear the city was blanketed.

We rose to enjoy the quiet of the first snowy morning of our life in New London. After a leisurely breakfast we put on our outdoor snow clothes and went out to the sidewalk. We had positioned snow shovels on the porch the day before so it was easy to jump right to the task of clearing the walk way. We needed to clear the path in front of 32 and 30 Broad St, a distance of about 100 ft. A neighbor using a snow blower saw us shoveling and made one swipe in front of 32 Broad St. down to the driveway and back to where he came from, waving a greeting, acknowledging we were all in this together. By ten a.m. the sidewalk was clear, and we needed a break. By now a number of residents were out walking about on the streets, greeting us and offering observations on the beauty of the day. Bienvenida and her two boys came out along with Anne a little later to pick up the shoveling for the whole driveway and parking lot. They were joined by Nate and Zuli til all the shovels were busy. Jumping right in to manage the task at hand everyone was out in the brisk late afternoon air, the boys finding time to throw snow at each other, the others enthusiastically getting their winter exercise, enabling all to access their cleaned off cars. By five o'clock the driveway was clear and Wendy and I took our car out for an errand (just to be sure we would be able to get out in the Monday morning rush).

We know we've made the right discernment in moving here. The experiment in truth is still evolving with much work yet to be done, but being flexible, patient and seeking, the process continues to evolve



## AT THE DEDICATION OF THE ST. FRANCIS HOUSE GARDEN

Saturday, June 21, 2009

Fr. Emmett Jarrett, TSSF



From "The Testament of St. Francis"

*To me, Brother Francis, the Lord thus gave the grace to do penance:  
when I was still a sinner, I thought it too bitter a thing to look at lepers, and the Lord led me  
to them and taught me to be merciful; after leaving them, that which seemed bitter now  
appeared as sweetness both for soul and body. When the Lord had entrusted brothers to me,  
nobody told me how to treat them; but the Most High revealed to me personally  
that I ought to live according to the form of the Holy Gospel.  
The Lord has revealed to me that we ought to give the following greeting to others:  
"May the Lord give you peace."*

What do I see for St. Francis House over the next ten years?

In the first decade, we moved to New London, renovated the two houses on Broad Street, and established a pattern of prayer and hospitality, contemplation and resistance, as we got to know our neighbors. We became *active* in the life of our neighbors, in New London and nationally. Our work with the Episcopal Urban Caucus from 2000 to 2005, and with the Catholic Worker Witness Against Torture in Washington, DC, in 2006-2008, were national in scope. Locally, our work has been with homeless neighbors, community gardens, education, and peace witness.

In the second decade, I believe we are being called to a more *contemplative* life in community. We will become what Dorothy Day called "the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world." As our new friend Jim Douglass teaches us, it is the contemplative solitude, the darkness of faith, that leads to revolutionary change in the world.

It's the Paschal Mystery -- the Cross and the Resurrection, denial of self and the vision of a new heaven and a new earth -- all over again. It is the vision Thomas Merton saw in Sri Lanka a few days before his death in 1968: "Everything is emptiness and everything is compassion."

This Garden, dedicated to our brother Mark Auer, is a symbol of that oasis. In the heart of the city, where summer nights bring sounds of anguish and suffering and death and inhuman treatment of the most vulnerable, we create a place of silence and of prayer. Only in this way can we sustain the compassion that Christ our God calls us to. Only by establishing a space for silence in a death-tormented and death-dealing culture can we share the oasis with the homeless and the hurt, the lonely and the lost. Only in this way of silence and compassion can we live lives that are worthy of men and women, children of God, and share that life.

May God who has given us the will to do these things  
give us the grace and power to accomplish them.

+ + +

2009 was the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Emmett, Anne, Nate and Sarah's moving into 30 Broad St. after a year of renovations. We celebrated the occasion on St. Francis Day which fell on Sunday, October 4 with friends, board members and colleagues with Nate overseeing the making of chicken gumbo for 150. Mark had always thought the hallway of Victory House should be an art gallery so we did a retrospective of Sarah's work through her high school years, a sampling of art from the pages of the *Troubadour* and of Amal Alwan's oil paintings of Baghdad from our hosting several exhibitions of her work starting in 2003. Sarah's painting of St. Francis in New London with a dove (ascending or descending?) was finished that weekend in honor of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Wyland whale mural which is on Eugene O'Neill Drive in downtown New London 5 blocks from St. Francis House is in the background of her painting.

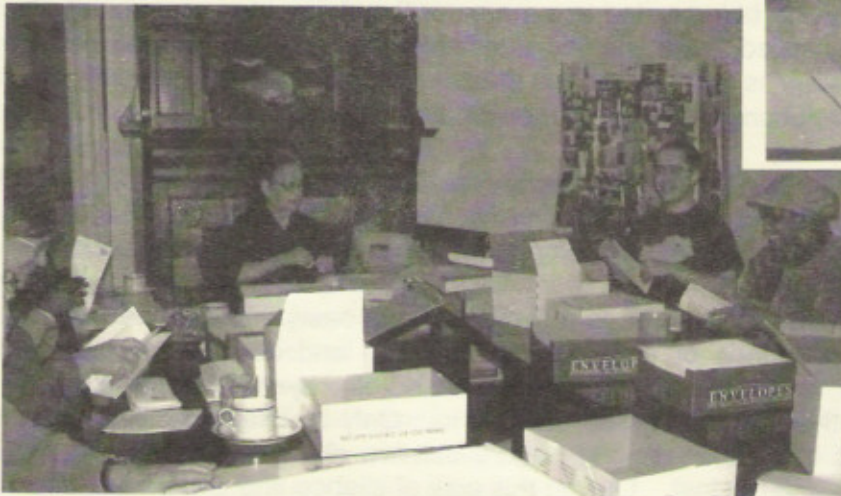


# A TIME FOR RENEWAL; A T



June Garden Dedication

Paul, Anne, Aunt Dorrie, Nate and Bienvenida at work



Acrylic on canvas by Sarah Jarrett

## LETTER FROM MARK'S SISTER

To: Emmett, Anne, Nate and Zuli, Sarah, Aunt Dorrie and all the extended family of the St. Francis House Community:

Thank you to all of you – and especially to Laura Burfoot for the creation and dedication of the Mark Auer Memorial Drive and Meditation Garden at St. Francis House. The transformation to an exquisitely beautiful garden – space is the work of many hands, many hearts, and many hours of hard work.

My brother Mark always appreciated a beautiful garden. There were summers when he was very proud of his August tomatoes and in later years at St. Francis House he enjoyed the window boxes on the porch of Victory House.

Most importantly, thank you for the support and love that the community gave Mark in the last four years of his life. St. Francis House provided him a home, a spiritual family, an intellectual forum and a home base in which to form and solidify his path and formation as a member of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis. From his first weeks at SFH he felt he had come home, and I know that the last four years were the happiest and most productive of his life.



# TIME FOR GROWTH



Francis statue, a gift from the Juniper Fellowship

Emmett, Wendy, Max stuffing envelopes



I'm happy to have spent many weekends and holidays at SFH with Mark – learning about the mission of SFH, watching how the talents of the community compliment one another and having in-depth talks with Mark about his life and what was inevitably approaching for him.

Now as my husband and I begin our retirement next week, we will be joining an intentional community in Iowa practicing transcendental meditation as taught Maharishi Makesh Yogi. I will miss seeing my friends at SFH and want to express my deepest gratitude for all that you have done for Mark.

I would love it if you could include this in the next Troubadour. Love, Amy

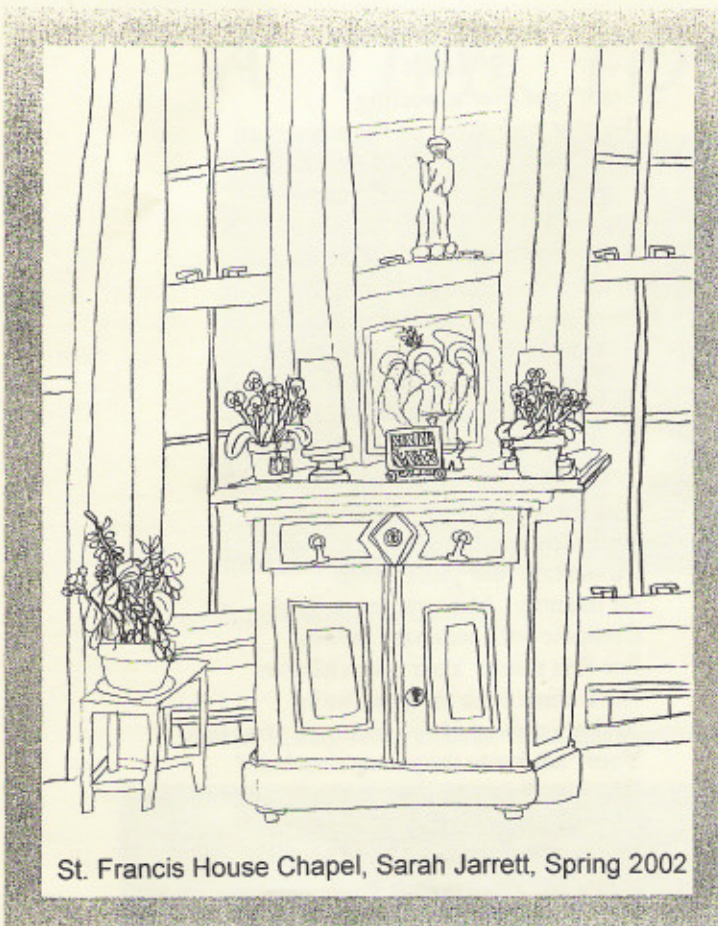


## Mark

I can't get over expecting  
To hear your voice on the answering  
Machine when I pick up the phone  
In the morning to record the day's  
Message. The painted wooden  
Robin still hovers over your place  
In the chapel. Any minute now  
I will hear your raucous cough  
Or the "kich, kich, kich" snicker  
Of your laugh. Now Russ has only  
One of us to tease him about being  
Baptist in an Anglo-Catholic company  
Or the token liberal among the orthodox.  
You took up a lot of room.  
Your tiny apartment has expanded  
To include four years worth  
Of memory. Military decorations  
Compete with seminary honors  
For first place. Your own children  
Have come back for your burial  
And my children have mourned your loss.  
Your "advice to the young marrieds"  
Given to Nate and Zuli on the last night  
Of your life was simply "Be kind."  
You and Sarah shared the dark  
Knowledge of a preacher's kid.  
I don't know what we'll do  
With your father's purple cassock.  
Nobody I know is likely to become  
A bishop. Nobody you know either.  
Anne cleaned the apartment yesterday,  
Giving away books to would-be Bible  
Scholars and clothes to homeless men.  
You wore the same sizes as her father did,  
Who never threw anything away.  
She wiped up a fine layer of dead skin  
From four years of suffering from psoriasis  
In the apartment. We celebrated Mass  
For you on July 19, with incense  
From St. James Episcopal Church  
And holy water bucket borrowed  
From St. Mary Star-of-the-Sea,  
And many more hymns than you  
Would have liked but you weren't  
In charge of the service. It's over now,  
All the alcohol and violence, your father's  
Disappointment in you and yours in  
Yourself and your own children's in you  
Your mother, who abandoned you and Amy  
When you were small, is reunited now  
With you, and all the disapproval  
That was wasted on both sides is given up.  
Perhaps you are fishing in heaven.  
You don't need "scooter races" now,  
Because you have what Aquinas called  
"The resurrection body" – eighteen years old  
Physically, but wise as all eternity.  
Good-bye, old friend.

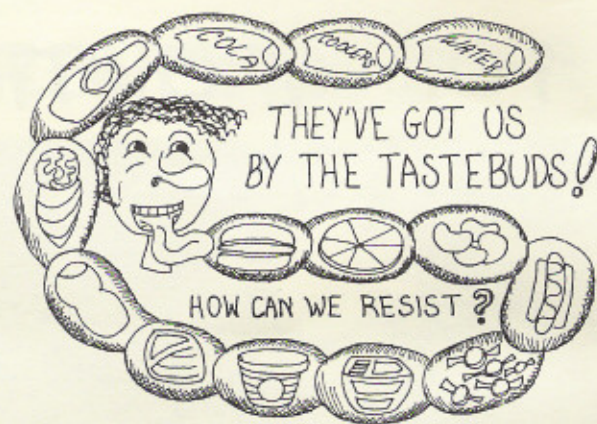
Emmett Jarrett



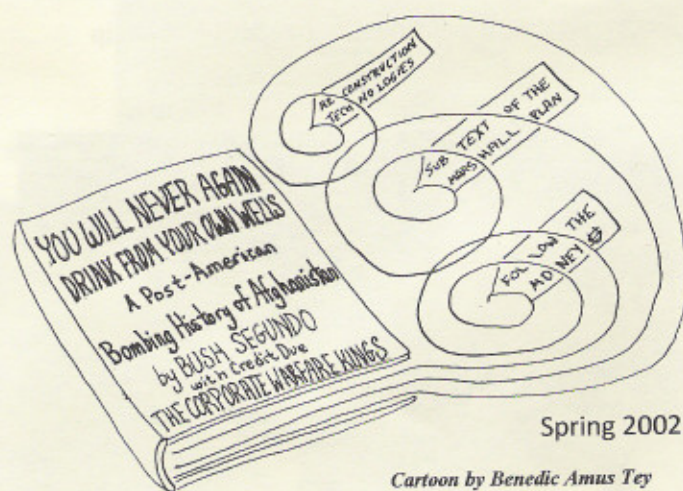


St. Francis House Chapel, Sarah Jarrett, Spring 2002

From the pages of the *Troubadour*:  
Work by Sarah Jarrett and  
Anne Scheibner

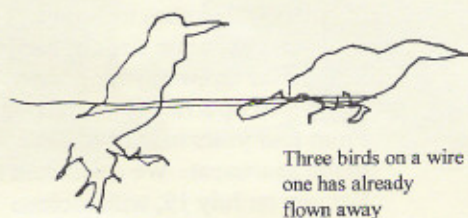


FRIDAY NIGHT MEETINGS  
Clarification of Thought - Spring 2002  
"Living in Community"



Spring 2002

Cartoon by Benedic Amus Tey

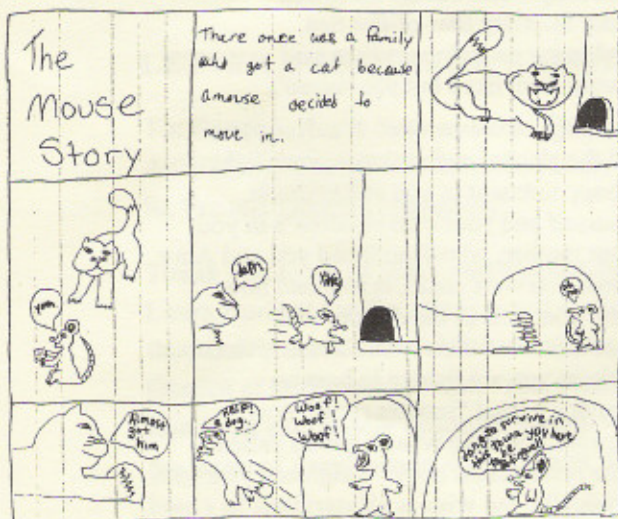


Three birds on a wire -  
one has already  
flown away



Winter 2002

Because the maker of us all  
Lay with the cattle in the stall  
Because the great comes to the small  
I thank my God.



"The Mouse Story" - a cartoon by  
Sarah Jarrett, based on the joke told  
by Butch Gamarra at the Assembly  
Banquet in Los Angeles Spring 2002



Altar in the Chapel at St. Francis House



## REFLECTION ON THE DRAFT OF TEN PRINCIPLES:

### Another "Teachable Moment"

by Emmett Jarrett, TSSF

Anne's lead article in this *Troubadour* invites the St. Francis House community to take the opportunity provided by the global economic crisis and our national failure to seek justice and peace in the world "to question our own day to day practices." In that light, I commend the *Draft of Ten Principles for Living in Community at St. Francis House* on pages 8-9.

I wrote the draft -- based on Gandhi's ten (or sometimes eleven) vows for the Satyagraha Ashram community -- with help from Anne, and from our newest resident members, Paul and Wendy Jakoboski. We shared them with the St. Francis House Board in October. Most people thought it impossible to use the term "chastity" without people thinking of chastity belts and missing the point of faithful relationships, sexual and otherwise. One member thought that not all labor in our society is "alienated," and pointed to her satisfaction with life and work as a teacher. But in general there was not a lot of excitement about the Draft.

We devoted the fall/winter Clarification of Thought series to the theme of *Resistance and Contemplation*, using some of the issues raised by the Ten Principles to focus our reflection. Ken Leech's talk on "Prayer and Prophecy" scared off a group from a local church, who said they would "never come back again." Ellen Adams's interactive presentation on "truth formation for individual and community" engaged everyone in attendance. Anne's talk on "nonviolent economics" cited Chuck Matthei's and Joanne Sheehan's statement: *As a way of life, nonviolence means the interjection of a transformative force into circumstances of conflict and injustice. Nonviolence means that we do not seek revenge or retaliation for injustice; our goal is transformation of ourselves and others, seeking truth and justice.* Frida Berrigan, who works on nuclear disarmament professionally, helped us understand the possibility of a "new start." Eric Swanfeldt helped us understand how long a process the Peace Pilgrimage has been and will be. Paul Jakoboski gave a rousing introduction to the changes that have happened in the industrial production of food in America and the changes we need to make in the way we live. And finally, Paul and Wendy talked about yoga as spiritual discipline, and the discipline of community life, using the Principles of the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis, of which Paul and I are professed members.

It does not seem to me, after this fall and winter time of reflection, that the Draft of Ten Principles has "taken hold," with us or with our extended community. While this is disappointing in one sense, it is not an unmitigated disaster. Our life is, after all, "an experiment with the truth," and we learn as much (or more) from our failures as from our successes. At this point, I think the response to the Ten Principles points to a critical issue in American life in general, and our community life as radical Christians in particular.

Gandhi developed over time the ten vows for the Satyagraha Ashram as a way for the community "to learn how to serve India." The vows represented the discipline required for individuals and the community "to serve with one's whole life." Gandhi wrote: *The object of the Ashram is to learn how to serve India with one's whole life and [then] to serve it, not inconsistent with universal welfare.* It seems to me to have been clearer, though certainly not easier, to understand the vocation for revolutionary change in one's country when you were a subject people with a foreign oppressor. The same could be said to apply to the freedom struggle in South Africa, and to the Civil Rights Movement in our own country. But how can we who are citizens of, and beneficiaries of the imperial domination of our country over the rest of the world, "serve our country" by opposing its dominance over our lives and the lives of others? Of course, Gandhi and Mandela and King all knew that liberation is an internal matter as well as a matter of changing political systems. We must become the people we are being called to be. We must become free ourselves before we can set our country (or the world) free from oppression. I have not figured this out yet. The Draft of Ten Principles is designed (I hope) to help me and the entire community -- both residential and extended community -- find our way.

"Teachable moments" come. The possibilities of local economy, local community service and politics, are many. But how do we use these opportunities in service of the greater task, to change the world?







A Draft of  
TEN PRINCIPLES FOR LIVING IN COMMUNITY  
AT ST. FRANCIS HOUSE



*After ten years of life in community at St. Francis House in New London, Conn., and in light of our experience during that time, we now undertake to live together according to the following principles. The principles are drawn from Christian, and other religious and radical political practices, and from the experience of other small communities in our country and elsewhere, in our time and in times past. We adopt these principles, and promise to follow them -- with the help of God -- because we believe they offer genuine happiness in our lives and we wish to share that happiness. We know that we can only change the world as we ourselves are changed. We seek to be the change we wish to make in the world. We choose to live by these principles also in order to invite others in our country and in the world to live similarly.*

- 1. Nonviolence** This is the foundational value. Gandhi called it *ahimsa*, and it means much more than refraining from killing. It is our "way of life," involving conversion of heart in order to honor all creation as of equal value with ourselves. We believe nonviolence is the law of the universe and we aim to live in harmony with all of creation. There are people and values we are willing to die for, but not to kill for.
- 2. Truth** Truth likewise is a foundational value. No one religion or philosophy has a monopoly on truth, and neither do we. Our commitment is to the truth itself, and to spending our lives seeking truth, being open to truth wherever it appears, and however others apprehend it.
- 3. Nonpossession** The root of war and violence is possessiveness. While human beings cannot live without material things -- food, clothing, shelter -- and relationships, when we turn those goods into commodities and seek to possess them, they possess us, and drive us to violence to protect them. When we achieve personal and communal self-control, we can use good things and not be used by them or destroy others in order to acquire them. Self-rule and personal responsibility are spiritual disciplines for us.
- 4. Chastity** Chastity is the fundamental virtue of faithful human relationships, not only sexual relations. It involves openness to all people and sees others as belonging to God and not as a means of self-fulfillment. Chastity is the form nonpossession takes in personal relationships.
- 5. Local economy** Gandhi called this *swadeshi* and saw the revival of local economy -- in the food we eat, the clothes we wear, our houses and businesses -- as the primary vehicle for individual self-control and communal independence. Use of locally grown food and other goods is not only healthy, it builds community with our neighbors who are farmers and artisans.



**6. Work** Work in a class-ridden society is boring and burdensome, but the work of free men and women is a primary human activity. Creative work is one of the most satisfying human achievements. Physical work is not less valuable than artistic or intellectual work. Our bodies need physical work for their well-being and our spirits need work to express our creativity. Shared work is a source of joy. Living is not something we earn, but something we do.

**7. Respect for all beings** Respect for our families and neighbors is only the beginning of an attitude of respect for all beings. Such an attitude leads us to combat racism, sexism, class and ethnic prejudices and other forms of oppression, but also to reject "speciesism" and the attitude that all of "nature" is available for human domination and destruction.

**8. Respect for all religions** St. Francis House is an intentional Christian community, and our corporate worship is normally Christian but we do not therefore disrespect other religious traditions. We have learned from many traditions, and incorporated much of our learning into our community life. Like others, we are -- and always will be -- seekers.

**9. Fearlessness** We commit to support each other and our neighbors in courageous witness to the truth as we are given to see it and practice it, realizing that there will be practical consequences to our witness as we resist unjust social and economic structures. But living differently is dangerous. We seek to be free from fear always and everywhere, because we trust Martin Luther King, Jr.'s faith that "the universe bends towards justice."

**10. Community** All of us were raised in an individualistic culture that values competition over cooperation and greed more than generosity. To overcome this training, we commit ourselves to community. We desire to be accountable to one another for our actions and practices. We pledge to support each other in our personal growth, but we recognize that genuine spiritual growth is never merely individual. The practice of community, so lacking in our culture, is essential for our growth in nonviolence and our quest for the truth. Consensus decision-making is more than finding common ground among ourselves. It is discerning the mind of Christ.

*The living of these principles, values, or vows, can only be achieved by the practice of spiritual disciplines designed to open our lives, as individuals and as a community, to the power that Christians call the Holy Spirit. We are committed, therefore, to forms of common prayer, personal meditation and contemplation, study and work to achieve the goals of community and be a model for our friends and neighbors in New London and the wider world.*

6 August 2009

Feast of the Transfiguration  
The 64th anniversary of Hiroshima



**6. Work** Work in a class-ridden society is boring and burdensome, but the work of free men and women is a primary human activity. Creative work is one of the most satisfying human achievements. Physical work is not less valuable than artistic or intellectual work. Our bodies need physical work for their well-being and our spirits need work to express our creativity. Shared work is a source of joy. Living is not something we earn, but something we do.

**7. Respect for all beings** Respect for our families and neighbors is only the beginning of an attitude of respect for all beings. Such an attitude leads us to combat racism, sexism, class and ethnic prejudices and other forms of oppression, but also to reject "speciesism" and the attitude that all of "nature" is available for human domination and destruction.

**8. Respect for all religions** St. Francis House is an intentional Christian community, and our corporate worship is normally Christian but we do not therefore disrespect other religious traditions. We have learned from many traditions, and incorporated much of our learning into our community life. Like others, we are -- and always will be -- seekers.

**9. Fearlessness** We commit to support each other and our neighbors in courageous witness to the truth as we are given to see it and practice it, realizing that there will be practical consequences to our witness as we resist unjust social and economic structures. But living differently is dangerous. We seek to be free from fear always and everywhere, because we trust Martin Luther King, Jr.'s faith that "the universe bends towards justice."

**10. Community** All of us were raised in an individualistic culture that values competition over cooperation and greed more than generosity. To overcome this training, we commit ourselves to community. We desire to be accountable to one another for our actions and practices. We pledge to support each other in our personal growth, but we recognize that genuine spiritual growth is never merely individual. The practice of community, so lacking in our culture, is essential for our growth in nonviolence and our quest for the truth. Consensus decision-making is more than finding common ground among ourselves. It is discerning the mind of Christ.

*The living of these principles, values, or vows, can only be achieved by the practice of spiritual disciplines designed to open our lives, as individuals and as a community, to the power that Christians call the Holy Spirit. We are committed, therefore, to forms of common prayer, personal meditation and contemplation, study and work to achieve the goals of community and be a model for our friends and neighbors in New London and the wider world.*

6 August 2009

Feast of the Transfiguration  
The 64th anniversary of Hiroshima





## Radical Discipleship: A Short Course in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christian Life and Work June 20 – 26, 2010



You are invited to join the St. Francis House community for a week-long course in **Radical Discipleship**: to live with us in community, to pray with us, to study the Bible – especially the Gospel of Matthew as a “story of discipleship.” Work in the community focuses on our homeless and marginalized neighbors, community gardening and witness for peace in one of the “abandoned places of Empire.” Not only will we **study the Bible**, we will study ourselves and our social location through **contextual theological and political reflection** on the world and what God is up to in 21<sup>st</sup> century America. Participants will have opportunities for recreation and play, rest and spiritual retreat, and small group work to apply the week’s learning to your situation in your own city or community. This course will be useful for individuals and groups who aim to deepen their discipleship, and also for pastors who must assist their congregations on the discipleship journey.

The Biblical study for the course will be **the Gospel of Matthew**. Matthew wrote his Gospel to help disciples understand their faith in the light of Israel’s rejection of Jesus as Messiah and follow him in a new and challenging global context. There are striking parallels to our situation of interfaith dialogue and conflict, and dramatic challenges for people of all faiths. Each of the five full days of study will be based on a section of the Gospel:

- Monday – Introduction and First Discourse (Sermon on the Mount), chapters 1-7
- Tuesday – Miracles, Missionary Discourse and Conflict, chapters 8-12
- Wednesday – Discourse in Parables, Community & Conflict, chapters 13-17
- Thursday – Community Discourse, Conflict & Polarization, chapters 18-22
- Friday – Judgment Discourse, Passion & Resurrection, chapters 23-28

The course begins with **orientation at 5 p.m. Sunday night, June 20**, and concludes by 11 a.m. **on Saturday, June 26** following a morning session on the implications of the week for your work at home and with a celebration of the **Holy Eucharist**. Basic instruction will be by members of the St. Francis House community, but skilled discipleship practitioners from elsewhere will join us for specific work and reflection. **The deadline for receipt of applications is May 1, 2010.** In order to assure attention to all, the number of participants will be limited to ten, so apply now. Some reading and writing in preparation for the week will be asked of participants.

A **typical day** looks like this:

7 a.m.	Breakfast available
8 a.m.	Morning Prayer in St. Francis House Chapel
9-12 a.m.	Bible Study and theological reflection
12 noon	Lunch
1-3 p.m.	Free time for rest and recreation
3-5 p.m.	Outdoor work/visits to community work sites
5:30 p.m.	Evening Prayer
6:00 p.m.	Dinner and Conversation
7:00 p.m.	Guest speakers/groups & personal reflection time
8:30 p.m.	Compline (Night Prayer)





**APPLICATION**  
to participate in ST. FRANCIS HOUSE  
**RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP: A Short Course**  
in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christian Life and Work  
June 20 -26, 2010



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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

Church affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_

Education \_\_\_\_\_

Current work \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary restrictions \_\_\_\_\_

Health/Medical issues \_\_\_\_\_

References 1.

2.

3.

Please attach a spiritual autobiography (not to exceed one or two pages, single-spaced typewritten) and a statement about why you wish to participate and what you hope to gain from the experience of radical discipleship at St. Francis House. Thank you.

There is no set fee for the Discipleship Course. This is an example of where our hospitality meets your generosity! If you consider prayerfully what you would be able to contribute, the divine economy will make it all work out. We look forward to hearing from you!



Saint Francis House  
P.O. Box 2171  
New London, CT 06320-2171

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U. S. Postage Paid  
Permit #122  
New London, CT 06320

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Telephone: (860) 437-8890

E-mail: [stfrancishousenl@att.net](mailto:stfrancishousenl@att.net)

Website: [www.stfrancishousenl.org](http://www.stfrancishousenl.org)

IN THIS ISSUE:

Anne Scheibner, "The Teachable Moment"

Clarification of Thought Schedule

Winter-Spring 2010

Responses to "The Two Favors"

Paul Jakoboski, "Victory House Visions"

Emmett Jarrett, TSSF, "Reflections on the Draft  
of the Ten Principles"

A Draft of Ten Principles for Living  
in Community at St. Francis House

Radical Discipleship Course – June 20-26  
Description and Application

**Center Section:** Dedication of the Mark Auer  
Memorial Drive and Meditation Garden  
The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and  
Troubadour Art Retrospective

