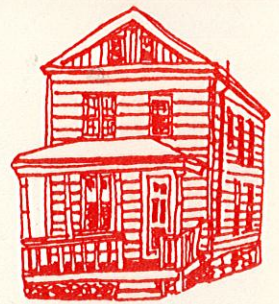


TROUBADOUR

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



Fall 2002

Vol. 4, No. 2

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ST. FRANCIS HOUSE: NEXT STEPS

THE STORY IS TOLD of an earnest missionary who was anxious to know the success of his work. Like a foolish gardener, he pulled up his plants every day to examine their roots. Needless to say, the plants did not thrive. It is tempting to explain that St. Francis House has arrived at "stage three" (or stage five or fifteen) of its growth and development. We don't know what the "stage" is, but much is happening, things are changing, and there's an air of newness about the place that we need to share with our readers and supporters.

First, we bought the house next door at 32 Broad Street, with the blessing of the New London Planning and Zoning Commission. Our friends at Equity Trust in Voluntown, CT, advanced the \$140,000 purchase price and also lent us \$60,000 for initial renovations. This money must be repaid, so our capital fund campaign is now in full swing. A generous gift of \$25,000 put us well on our way to making the fund-raising real. Elsewhere in this issue is a more detailed report on fund-raising and the capital campaign.

Second, the people in the House have changed. Anne and Emmett, Nate and Sarah, are still here, of course. But Marina has moved back to Hartford and is now in a 120-day rehab program. Her time with us was good for her and for us, but the kind of support services she needs are not within our ability, so we're happy that she's finding what she needs in the right place. We learned a lot from Marina, who is a warm and generous-hearted person, and deserves every chance to make a life in freedom.

Chrissy Guarnieri, who was with us for a little over two years, has now found her own apartment in Willimantic and will be completing her undergraduate education soon. Chrissy helped with cooking for Friday night suppers, wrote for the TROUBADOUR (see her report on her retreat in this issue), organized poetry readings, and worked to create a database for both St. Francis House and the Episcopal Urban Caucus – all while attending college full-time and caring for her children and grandchildren! She will not disappear from our lives but the Hermitage is now available for retreats and sabbaticals rather than transitional housing.

In the Calvary Hermitage for the months of September and October is our Board member and old friend Dick Marks. An article elsewhere in this issue tells about Dick's hopes and plans for his time with in the Hermitage.

Again, this issue contains the URBAN NETWORKER, articles by and about the Episcopal Urban Caucus, for which St. Francis House is the national headquarters and which Anne and I serve as national coordinators. This arrangement was Board member Ed Rodman's idea – Ed was the previous coordinator for 15 years! – and we think it has worked out well for both the Caucus and St. Francis House. The focus of the Caucus now reflects the spiritual commitment of St. Francis House, and the House has a national arena for its ministry of justice and peace.

Dorothy Day used to say that God works the perfection of his will "by little and by little." That is our experience. Whatever stage we've reached, God is working still, and God is good – all the time.



INVITATION TO JOIN ST. FRANCIS HOUSE COMMUNITY

It's time now to invite people to join the St. Francis House Community. For the past two years and more, the community has consisted of our family and those who were here because they needed a place to be. That has been a good thing, and we've learned a lot from the experience. But now it's time to ask people to live with us who will be here, first and foremost, because they want to share community life and work.

The house at 32 Broad Street has two usable apartments at the moment, and will soon have two more. The community will have space for two singles and two couples to live there, with their own kitchen facilities. The invitation is to people who want to explore Christian community life – to share a life of prayer, hospitality, and justice ministry in downtown New London.

At a minimum, those desiring to explore such a vocation commit to a shared life of prayer, community Bible study and discernment of the ministry, work on the House and its projects, including the Episcopal Urban Caucus, and work in the neighborhood as it develops. You don't have to be an Episcopalian, but we are looking for Christians interested in "radical discipleship." Applications are being accepted now, and after an interview, candidates will be accepted for an exploratory period of 3-6 months. This is rather like a novitiate, and is designed to



allow candidate and community to see how we live and work together, before making a longer term commitment.

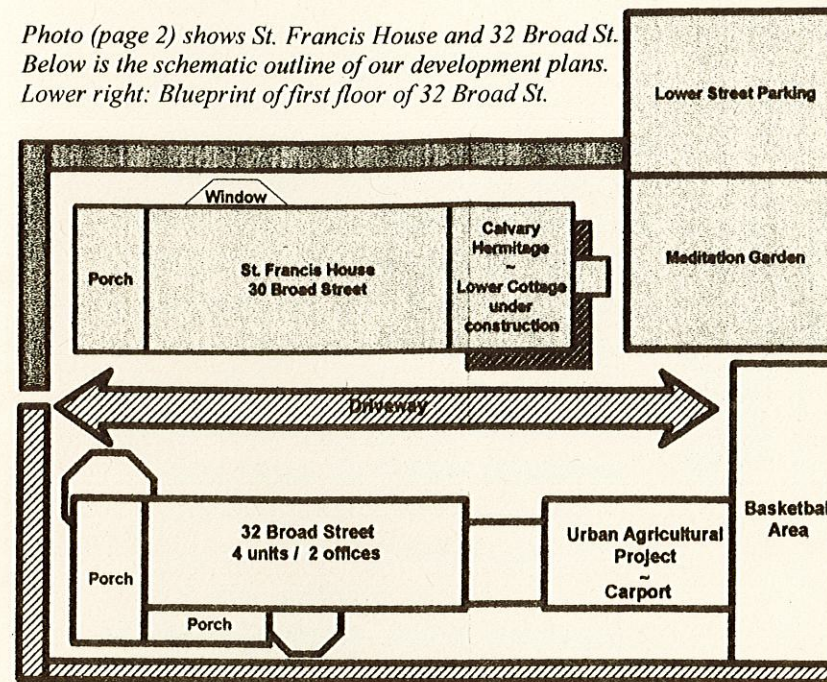
Whether you are a young person who wants to explore discipleship before "settling down" in whatever form that takes for you, or a person who has years of experience and desires to do something different with your future, you are welcome to apply. We look forward to hearing from you.

DICK MARKS BEGINS RESIDENCY IN CALVARY HERMITAGE

Our Board member Dick Marks is in residence at St. Francis House during the months of September and October. Dick has just retired after a 29 year career in management with the Pan American Health Organization and is beginning a process of discernment that he hopes will help him see God's plan for him in the coming years. He feels that an in-depth participation in the life and work of St. Francis House over these two months will give him a grounding and direct personal experience in prayer and spirituality as well as in service to others. This might possibly lead to his serving in a volunteer role (shades of old times in the Peace Corps!) in a faith-based context.

Under Emmett's direction, Dick will be trying to develop an Ignatian-based practice of meditation and contemplative prayer for himself as a basis for personal spiritual development and ministry. He will also help to staff ongoing SFH projects and participate along with Emmett, Anne, and other residents in communal activities of prayer, study, meals, and work. Dick's residency will serve as a trial run for establishing general principles and practices for SFH residents, including common prayer services, study of the Bible, reading courses, manual labor, cooking and housekeeping for the community, and meals in common. Appropriate levels of contribution to SFH expenses by (or on behalf of) residents will also be established.

Photo (page 2) shows St. Francis House and 32 Broad St. Below is the schematic outline of our development plans. Lower right: Blueprint of first floor of 32 Broad St.



SEND MONEY!

Not only does St. Francis House need community members to share the life and help with the work, we need money! We need lots of money to pay for the purchase and renovation of the house at 32 Broad Street so we can have a place to put the members who will share the ministry.

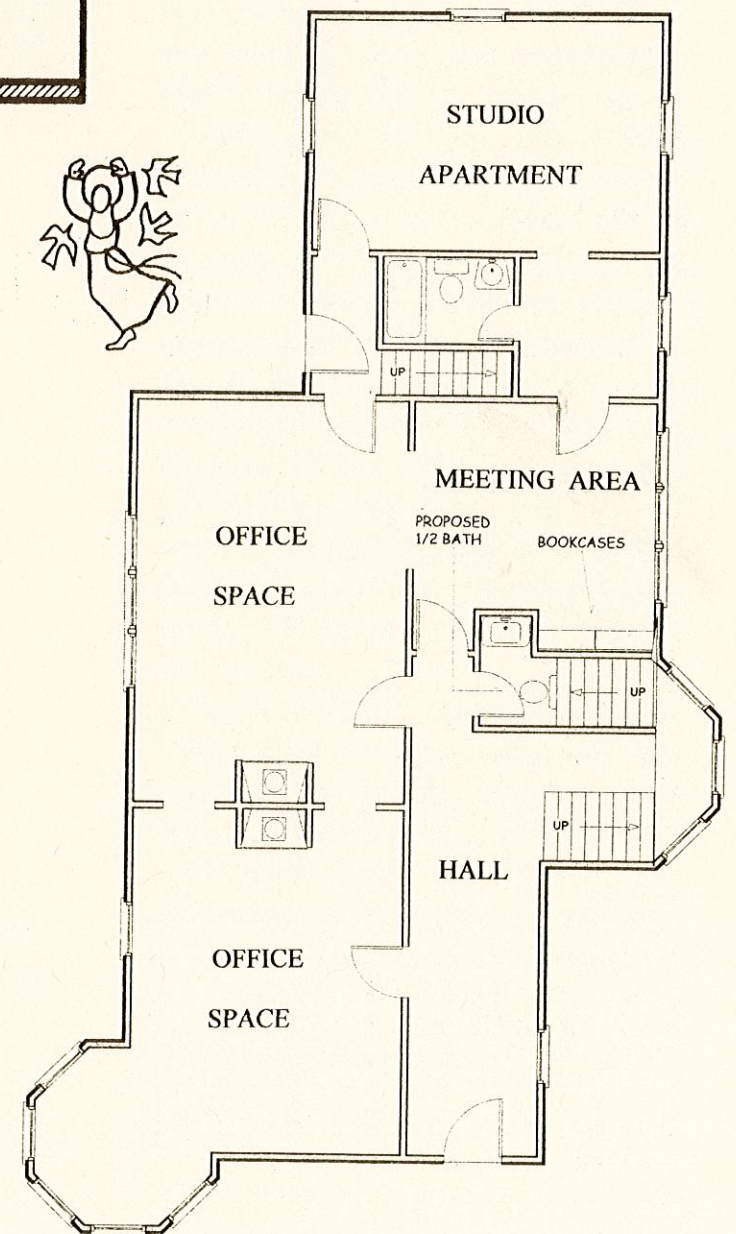
We have received generous gifts from two families, one of \$50,000 and one of \$25,000. We are asking friends to contribute to the Capital Fund Campaign to help us pay for the purchase and renovation of 32 Broad Street. You have already supported the work of the House. If you can now make a contribution of \$5,000, or \$2,000, or \$1,000, you will be a major contributor in our small world. All contributions are tax-deductible as St. Francis House is a non-profit corporation under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Major items are often paid for in small increments, so contributions in any amount are welcome. Our regular supporters will be receiving letters from our Board inviting them to contribute. Please give as generously as you can.

Our "revised budget" for the capital campaign is just about what it was last year, but we're leaving out buying the farm for the moment.

CAPITAL FUND BUDGET

Complete work on 30 Broad Street	\$ 50,000
Purchase 32 Broad St.	140,000
Agriculture Fund	50,000
Initial renovation of 32 Broad Street	60,000
Publications & website	50,000
Total	\$ 350,000



WHAT IS A RETREAT AND WHY DO WE NEED TO HAVE THEM?

by Chrissy Guarnieri

*Day One at Mercy Center
in Madison, Connecticut*



I have made a mistake; I sat down and don't want to get up! From this season-worn oak chair I start my silence. Long Island Sound beats against the sand in no particular rhythm. It is an overcast afternoon, so the horizon is a cloudy white fog separating the almost white grey of the sky and water. My rucksack sits on the matching slotted chair opposite mine. To my right a clover-filled lawn stretches itself and engulfs all but the ears of a butterscotch and grey rabbit, who eyes me calmly. The labyrinth is located at the grasses' edge just this side of a split-rail fence, weighted with overgrown flowering bushes; it marks the transition between the sea of green and the grey water of Long Island Sound. Trees, shrubs and flowers located in natural gardens complete the view. Though humid, there is a light breeze that picks up...making me more aware of my proximity to the water. The synchronized sound of a large double engine plane passes quickly, restoring the sounds of nature: water, birds and flying insects.

I wonder if my friends Anne or Kate sat in this chair before? I understand in this first half hour Anne's choice of word for this place, 'lightness' and Kate's, 'serene'. This is a place that one can find many things. I have come seeking my center.

Day Two at Mercy Center

I wonder where, surrounded in the beauty here at Mercy Center, I shall find my center? A cardinal perches on a limb, a Monarch butterfly rests on the purple iris, the rabbit's nose twitches above the clover, the breeze dislodges an azalea bloom that is past its season, a grey and white puss stalks hopefully beneath the budded rhododendron, a hungry gull circles above the sound then darts under the water's surface and emerges with its prey, before I can blink. A crow's song disturbs the quiet. I am full. I am content. I sit once again in the season-worn oak chair. The view is altered by a change in the weather; today the sound beats the shore roughly, irritated by a brisk wind. I ate my meals today on the side porch that is provided for those on retreat in silence. I am at ease. I have read, meditated, sketched trees and flowers and written in my journal. I am happy to think about the 'now', to live in this moment; I don't want to lose the precious time I have here processing stressful thoughts.

Day Three at Mercy Center

I have fasted for eighteen hours. I slept but experienced nightmares. How do I rid myself of this stress? I feel betrayed, angry and confused. It is difficult for me to remember that the 'energetic' (noisy) groups that arrived today are God's children, difficult too, to remember that they have come for their own purpose in life, even if it is in direct contrast to my 'silent retreat'. Like a lump of clay on the potter's wheel I went from feeling wobbly the first two days to feeling a little more centered. All these people make me wobble and I feel like I've been thrown from the wheel. God is my potter; I must try to get back on the wheel. I don't have much time left to find my center.

During lunch I tried to chew each mouthful forty times, to focus on one thing to regain my personal space...peace and silence. To that end I listen to the movement of water and inhale its endlessness. I walk around the grounds feeling restless trying to stay one jump ahead of the 'energetic' groups. I have many more questions than answers right now.

The sound is not visible from my spot on the porch. Heavy fog hangs like wet linens on a clothesline. There will be a storm today. The wind and dark heavy clouds are the precursor. I feel exuberance in the sound of each crashing wave and energy from the rapidly approaching storm. What has been a serene retreat has suddenly

been stirred and the demons of my own heart and mind pull me in many directions. Where is God's peace and grace in all of this? The answer lies in the space between me and myself. I simply cannot see it.



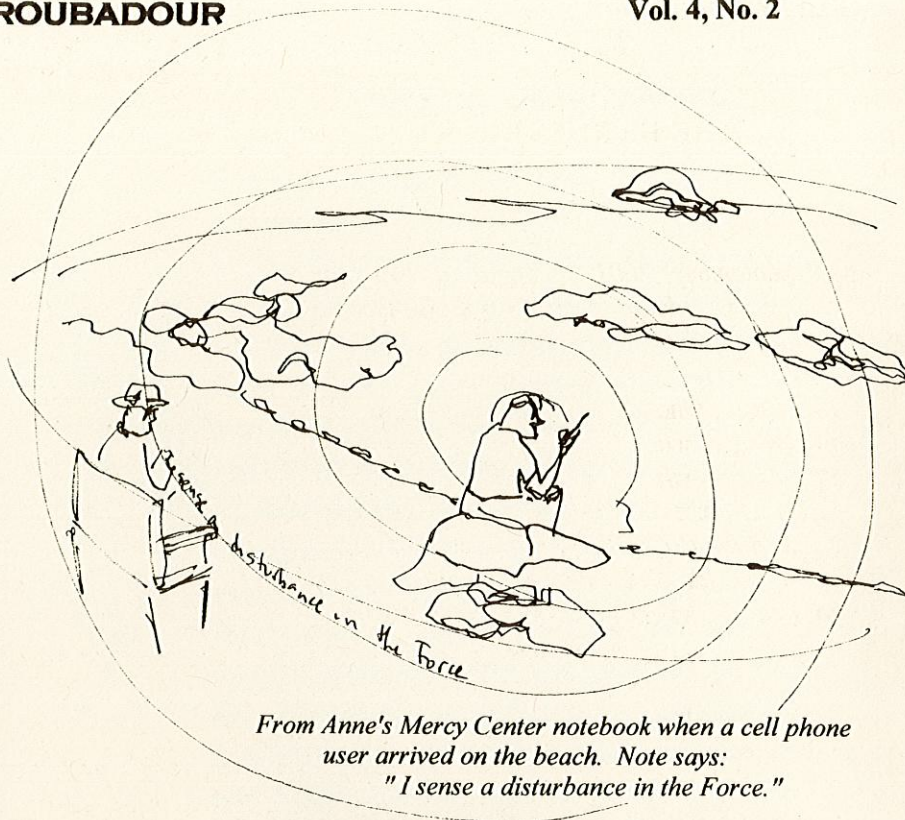
Meditation drawing from Anne Scheibner's notebook during her retreat at Mercy Center in late May. The drawing is done by concentrating on the plant and drawing without looking at the paper "to see if it's right." The note next to this drawing says: "Is it a weed to be rooted out or a flower to be enjoyed and cultivated?"

Day Four at Mercy Center

I came in search of my center... I came looking for peace... I came to hear the silence... I came to focus on the still small voice and to listen. I blew it. I went through a process these past few days, a process of my own projection. I came for answers and epiphany and I leave with a minor tune-up.

I tried so hard to be what I thought this silent retreat was all about that I missed a lot of the important parts of retreat. Seeking peace is an important part of the puzzle, however, we can't always run away to do that. We can't expect the other participants in our day-to-day life to stop so that we can find our center. Acceptance of all the many parts of our life but managing the stress is what we really need. So, what is a retreat and why do we need them? And, what did I learn on my silent retreat?

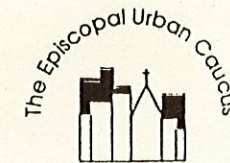
For me a retreat means a time of renewal when I commune with God. I learned that my center is just where I left it. My spirituality is healthy and my sense of humor is necessary. After reflection I realized that I spend too much time in my head. I'm not sure if that is a good thing or bad, or if I can or want to change that behavior. My sleeping and eating habits leave a lot to be desired, but they are things I can work on. I learned that going on a retreat does not have to be a huge earth-shaking experience; it can simply mean that I



step into a tranquil space in my head and slow down enough to remember my name. God is still with me wherever I am, though if I had my choice I would like to physically get away from it all, that is a treat! Eating in silence gave me time to remember to take time for me. I will try, however, to remember to appreciate all those tiny God given retreats that come through my life everyday, but were more noticeable at Mercy Center. I will try to take more time and not to hurry through life, but more important, not to allow others to hurry me by their impatience or demands.

"Keep me safe oh God, for in you do I take refuge" Psalm 16: 1

Chrissy Guarnieri came to St. Francis House two years ago as one of our first residents. She has been a big help to us as we learned about the ministry of hospitality, and has contributed to our work on publications and the Urban Caucus and many other projects. She leaves this month to pursue her studies. We wish her God speed.



THE URBAN NETWORKER

Fall 2002

CAUCUS BOARD MEETS IN CHICAGO

Adopts Purpose Statement

The Board of the Episcopal Urban Caucus met in Chicago August 16-19 and engaged in a process of prayer and reflection aimed at discerning the future of urban ministry in the USA in the 21st century and the role of the Caucus in that future. Dr. Linda C. Powell, of New York University, led the Caucus leadership in the retreat portion of the time, which generated a new "statement of purpose" for the Caucus:

The purpose of the Episcopal Urban Caucus is to be an instrument of the Gospel exercising radical discipleship in Church and society to hold the feet of the Episcopal Church to the fire of social justice.

Officers R. P. M. Bowden, President, the Rev. Margaret Rose, Vice President, Velva Wright, Secretary, and Diane Pollard, Treasurer, co-coordinators the Rev. Emmett Jarrett, TSSF, and Anne P. Scheibner, as well as Board members Hisako Beasley, Matthew Brunner, Maggie Alston Claud, the Rev. Butch Gamarra, Bob Graham, Jamesetta Hammons, the Rev. Chuck Lane, Barbara Larsen, Cay Sibley and Ralph Sibley, met for intensive work at the Cenacle Retreat Center in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago.

We prayed, laughed, struggled, argued, agreed and disagreed, learned, changed our minds, and in general enjoyed the company of fellow workers in the struggle for the Reign of God. We reflected on the history of the Caucus and the Episcopal Church during the past 23 years, and we looked at the needs of a new generation of people of God in the Episcopal Church and beyond for the future.

At the Board meeting following the Retreat, chaired by President R. P. M. Bowden, the Board proposed some changes in the by-laws to make our structure even more democratic than it is. We adopted the Purpose Statement to present to the Assembly in Chicago for discussion and adoption in February, 2003. The Board heard financial reports, discussed ways of encouraging youth participation and being responsible for members who are under-age, considered a third printing of *To Heal the Sin-Sick Soul*, the EUC published book on anti-racist spirituality, and approved plans for the Chicago assembly.

The theme of the 23rd Assembly will be **Church Growth or Discipleship?** and will seek to engage the Episcopal Church's commitment to a new initiative in evangelism, under the name "20/20" in critical theological dialogue. What happens if we look at the future of the Church from the perspective of urban ministry? What if justice and peace were key constituents of our planning for the future? Stay tuned!

URBAN MINISTRY COURSE OFFERED IN NEW LONDON

An Urban Ministry Course on the Sheffield model will be offered this year at St. Francis House in New London, CT, by the Episcopal Urban Caucus and the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice. The course will be taught by **Geoff Curtiss**, of Hoboken, NJ, the president of ENEJ, who has many years' experience with the Sheffield, England, course model. It is designed for people who have local ministry settings and want to dig deeper into their context and their theological underpinnings.

There will be ten days of overnight residential class work spread over the academic year in two day segments on Mondays and Tuesdays. The Course will help participants know their local ministry settings by undertaking contextual and situational analysis, by exploring the nature of community ministry, by engaging in theological reflection on both ministry and context, as well as biblical paradigms for new ways of thinking and acting that will bring local people together for witness and action and define projects for the formation of discipleship groups.

Cost of the course is \$500 and includes tuition, books, resource materials, meals, etc. Inexpensive local housing is available. Tentative dates for the course segments are: Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 2002; Dec. 9-10, 2002; Feb. 3-4, 2003; March 31-April 1, 2003; and June 9-10, 2003. A maximum of 12 participants can be accepted. For more information contact Geoff Curtiss directly by email at gcurtiss@allsaintshoboken.com.



EUC Board Retreat in Chicago - Back row: Bob Graham, Chuck Lane, Margaret Rose, Ralph Sibley, Velve Wright, Matthew Brunner, Emmett Jarrett, RPM Bowden, Maggie Alston Claud, Barbara Larsen, Cay Sibley. Front row: Diane Pollard, Butch Gamarra, Linda Powell, Jamesetta Hammons, Hisako Beasley. Anne Scheibner took the photo.

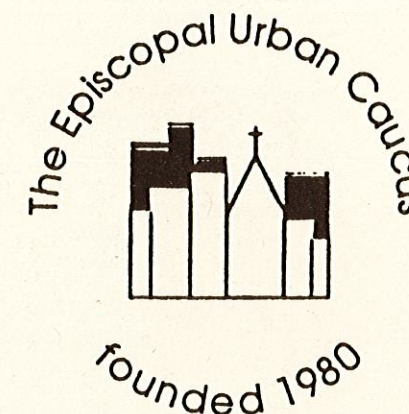


THOUGHTFUL ARTICLES INVITED

The coordinators, and indeed the leadership of the Caucus, do not have to be the only people who write articles for **The Urban Networker**. News articles and reflection pieces on the theology and practice of urban ministry are welcomed. Send to the Editors at

**Episcopal Urban Caucus
PO Box 2247
New London, CT 06320**

Articles may be edited for length, but we are really interested in hearing what members of our network have to say about their life and work.



A CALL TO THE 23rd NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF EPISCOPAL URBAN CAUCUS CHICAGO

February 26—March 1, 2003

The Episcopal Urban Caucus will hold its 23rd national Assembly in Chicago, February 26-March 1, 2003. As the USA moves ever deeper into war, pushing economic globalization into imperial military rule, the Church is called to organize for justice and peace. But the stated agenda of the Episcopal Church is "to double the number of Episcopalians in the USA by 2020." What is wrong with this picture? While the Urban Caucus is committed to evangelism that "seeks and serves Christ in all persons" and "strives for justice and peace among all people," we question the strategy of growth for its own sake. Must the Church turn inward as the country moves relentlessly toward war? What has happened to the commitment to building an inclusive and anti-racist Church? Can we demand of our Church the kind of Bible study, theological reflection and commitment to community that sustained the Resistance in Europe during World War II? Come to Chicago, join the conversation and experience "radical discipleship" in the Episcopal Church! This is the question:

CHURCH GROWTH OR DISCIPLESHIP: Whither the Episcopal Church?

Our keynote speaker will be the Rev. Dr. **Ian Douglas**, professor of world mission at the Episcopal Divinity School. Ian will help us frame the question of growth in terms of the baptismal covenant. The Episcopal Peace Fellowship, whose headquarters is in Chicago, will offer an extended workshop entitled **From Violence to Wholeness**, as well as host their annual luncheon at the Assembly. The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice will meet with the Caucus as usual, and present their third annual **Gloria Brown Economic Justice Award** to an outstanding ministry. Site visits will include **St. Edmund's Church and Community Development Corporation**, a center of urban mission and revitalization on Chicago's South Side. And much more!

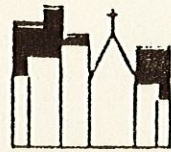
Church Growth or Discipleship? Answer the Call. Come to Chicago and be part of the conversation. Which way for urban mission? Whither the Episcopal Church?

ROWAN WILLIAMS APPOINTED TO CANTERBURY

The Prime Minister's Office announced on July 23 that Queen Elizabeth II had appointed Archbishop of the Church in Wales Rowan Williams to be the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury. Much speculation led up to this announcement and much conversation has followed it. The US media have focused on Williams' openness to the ordination of women and gay and lesbian people, while ignoring his firm and reasoned opposition to the "war on terrorism" and US-British occupation of Afghanistan, as well as his insistence that a US invasion of Iraq, now promised by the Bush administration for early 2003 would be an act of state terrorism. Few seem to have noticed his sharp criticism of Disney enterprises for their rampant consumerism and exploitation of children.

At this moment of widespread prognostication, it is worth noting that the Archbishop of Canterbury is the head of a state church appointed by a monarch. God has in the past demonstrated the ability to subvert worse ecclesiastical systems, but there is also a track record of those systems working quite well to neutralize the spirit and power of capable men and women. Our US Episcopal Church has so little experience of intellectuals and theologians, let alone socialists, in the House of Bishops that we hope it will know what to make of the genuine article. Rowan Williams has the opportunity to be the best Anglican leader since Michael Ramsey if he remembers Ramsey's advice to "fret not

thyself because of the ungodly" (Psalm 37:1). Ramsey thought that one of the essential requirements for Christian ministry was the sort of theological depth and spiritual lightness that enabled one "not to fret" at much of what seems important in the world and the Church. The Episcopal Urban Caucus congratulates Archbishop-designate Williams on his appointment. We will pray for him and for the Anglican Communion at this time of crisis and opportunity.



THE RAIN LIKE GRACE

The rain comes down like grace
in torrents drenching the thirsty soul.
Steam rises with morning prayers
from the asphalt parking lot.
The chatterbox rain talks itself out
as the sun comes up over Broad Street
and trucks deliver groceries to
California Fruit and elegant provisions
for Tony D's Italian restaurant.
Men huddle in the light
from the windows of Labor Ready,
waiting to open its jaws.
At the end of the day
the men return from their work,
cash their paychecks
and quench their thirst
with quarts of Colt 45 malt liquor.
"It's outrageous," Mike says.
"Some of these guys got GI benefits,
they could live in houses if they had the chance."

Emmett Jarrett

THE HARDEST PART

by Barbara Barrett

In September 2001, I began a two-year course of study sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut called Ministry Exploration and Education Program (MEEP). One of the requirements of the program was a four-hour-per-week practicum, which would provide a new learning experience and perhaps help me discern the direction of my servant ministry in the world. In June, 2002, we were asked to write a reflective paper answering such questions as: what was the hardest part of the practicum experience and how we overcame this difficulty, the greatest blessing we received, and whether or not we've discerned a call to a specific ministry. The following paper was written on June 24, 2002.

The practicum component of MEEP is designed to give us an opportunity to try out a servant ministry in what is a new area for each of us. My practicum took me to St. Francis House in New London, an organization committed to community living in an urban setting, devoting time to prayer, hospitality, and social justice. The community is composed of Father Emmett Jarrett, an assistant priest at St. James, New London and a member of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis; his wife, Anne Scheibner; their two children, Nate who is 17 and Sarah who is 12. Chrissy Guarnieri has also lived there since she found herself unexpectedly homeless in August of 2000, and during the course of this year another woman came to live in the house as she sought to re-establish herself in the community. Another regular, although she has her own apartment nearby, is "Aunt Dorrie," Anne's aunt. This is the community as of June 2002.

St. Francis House is, in the words of Gandhi an "experiment with truth," and the ministry is inspired by "the Gospel, the witness of St. Francis of Assisi, and the



Catholic Worker movement." My participation consisted mainly of attending the Friday evening "Clarification of Thought" programs. I would go to the house about 3:30 and help clean the common areas and set the table or do whatever was needed. At 5:30 we gathered for evening prayer using the African method of bible study, which was a learning experience for me. This was followed by a soup, salad, and bread supper. There were usually 10 to 15 of us present. Emmett is a wonderful cook, and he was kept busy serving bowls of soup to people who arrived at varying times, or seconds to almost everyone. Anne invariably gave up her spot at the table as more people arrived. I generally sat at the far end, trying to encourage people to move down to that end or at least to sit down so Emmett would know how many soups to serve and so Anne would know if extra chairs were needed. Hospitality is a way of life at St. Francis House. Guests are always greeted enthusiastically and treated with respect and include "all sorts and conditions" of people.

For the first half of the year, we met every Friday discussing alternately the "Works of Mercy" and holding "Truth Forums" to discuss the U.S. response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Many of the people who gathered on Friday evenings are long-time peace activists. Some were very outspoken in their criticism of U.S. foreign policies. I felt overwhelmed. The people at the table knew much more than I about our government's involvement in the affairs of other countries, and most of what was discussed portrayed U.S. involvement as self-serving, unjust, and detrimental. There was no flag waving, as was happening in most other places. The experience made me question my own values, my own understanding of globalization which I found lacking, and my life style. I was very uncomfortable. I felt uninformed and unable (or not courageous enough) to enter many of the conversations, even if I felt that a different perspective might have been a good addition. I sometimes felt that my silence might have

continued....

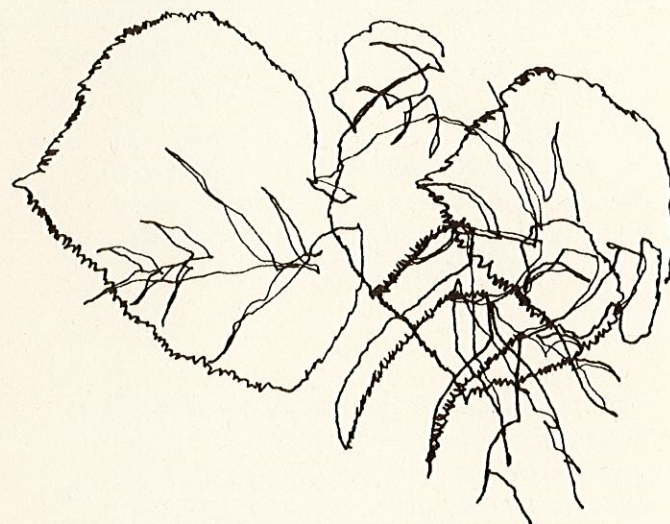
been interpreted as agreement. This was the hardest part of the practicum for me. I never did resolve it, although I did talk with my spiritual director about my inner conflict. The Friday evening topics changed in the second half of the year to "Living in Community."

The speakers that I most enjoyed hearing were from the Catholic Worker. Prior to my practicum at St. Francis House, I had barely heard of Dorothy Day and had only a vague notion of what the Catholic Worker movement was about. I had the opportunity to hear Brian Kavanaugh from the Catholic Worker in Hartford speak of his concerns about the war in Israel and the call he felt to go there and be a witness for peace, which he did a short time later. I heard Chris Allen-Doucot speak about land mines in Iraq and saw pictures of children maimed by those mines—not pictures I would choose to see but truth that I should not ignore. I painted the back steps with a First Order Franciscan brother who, when I bemoaned the state of the world and the feeling that no matter what I tried to do it would be so miniscule, told me I had an ego problem. A few days later on the radio I heard a definition of ego: edging God out. I think the Franciscan brother, who also teaches social work at Columbia, is right. God is in charge, not me.

When did I feel the closest to Jesus Christ? Maybe it was the evening I saw a man sitting sort of cock-eyed on a chair, deep in prayer. He turned out to be Kenneth Leech, author of *True Prayer*. But he was not writing about prayer, or speaking about prayer, he was **praying**. Or maybe it was when I was painting on the front porch and greeted a young man going by. He asked me what they did in there, i.e., in St. Francis House. I explained it briefly and told him he would be welcome to come in some Friday evening. And I prayed for him silently, participating in that ministry of hospitality which seemed important to Jesus.

So what have I learned? That there are people really believing and living out the gospel message, with their entire life—their energy and their resources. I had to face the

Meditation drawing from Anne's Mercy Center notebook. The note next to it says: "Too complex to draw - how can any human being have the temerity to think to redesign (its genetic structure)."



Barrett, continued....

fact that I'm not one of those people. I learned how uncomfortable I can be in a situation where my values and actions are in conflict within myself and with other people's. But I'm in the process of discerning what ministry I'm called to. I'm motivated to become more informed and to work toward equity and justice. I've also made friends with the St. Francis House community and intend of stay connected to the life and work that happens there. A practicum, which started out a bit uncomfortably for me, seems to be calling me, for my own spiritual health, to stay connected.

A Passover for Our Time

A Sermon by Bob Moore

*I will execute judgments: I am the Lord.
The blood [which you put on the two
doorposts and lintel of your houses]
shall be a sign for you on the houses
where you live: when I see the blood, I
will pass over you, and no plague shall
destroy you . . .* Exodus 12:12-13

We hear the Passover story today as our nation and our world await the first anniversary of September 11, 2001. As we recall those horrible events, we remember the shattered lives, broken dreams, and lost innocence that day brought. Our emotions overflow with strong feelings: confusion, fear, anger. Along with those feelings also comes inspiration as we remember the spontaneous outpouring of goodness of which the human spirit is capable. In the many commemorations to be held throughout the country, we will grieve for every precious life lost. And so we should. We will remember with admiration the courageous firefighters and police officers who put their lives on the line. And so we should. We will celebrate the ordinary citizens who rushed to give their blood or offer help wherever they were needed. And so we should. We will give thanks for the efforts of our government to make air travel safer, even while we complain about the minor inconveniences it causes. Some will laud our nation's military responses as a way to make the world safer for us. Others will ask, "Isn't there another way?" The group **Families for a Peaceful Tomorrow**, whose members lost loved ones in the World Trade Center, will observe September 11 as an occasion for the entire world to honor those who died by working to create a peaceful future. They proclaim hope in the face of despair, announcing that a new future is possible, that we can and must find a better way. Their lives bear witness to the

words of A.J. Muste: "There is no way to peace; peace is the way."

It is a somber time. As we live in the shadow of terrorism and the fear of further terrorist attack, we await a passover in our time, a passover of terrorism for us and for our world. Our desperation is all the more poignant when we realize that we feel no safer now than we were a year ago. What good news does the church have to proclaim in the face of this bad news?

This has been a hard sermon for me to prepare, because I am going to say some things that may not sound like good news. If you see things differently, I hope we can have some dialogue about it. The good news I have found is this, put simply: we are living in a teachable moment in history. God has given us an opportunity to learn from what is happening in our world. In addition to confronting our griefs and fears, in addition to remembering the 3,000 who died in the World Trade Center and Pentagon and the more than 4,000 civilians who died in Afghanistan as a result of the US bombing response, we can use this anniversary as a time for national self-examination and repentance. Rather than sabre-rattling and tough talk about going to war, this can be a time to take a good look at ourselves as a nation, to try to see ourselves as others see us--particularly the have-nots of our world. Rather than try to destroy those who represent "a threat to our way of life," we can examine our way of life, especially those ways that alienate us from the rest of God's family throughout the world.

This kind of self-examination will not be easy, because it goes to the core of some of our deeply held beliefs. A case in point: We've been taught that we can have everything we want, have as much of it as we want, and have it all instantly. We are under constant attack by advertisers to buy things we don't need. We are continually told by TV that the good life consists of driving expensive cars that get poor gas

mileage, with never a hint of the damage the emissions to do our world's environment. Much of what we have comes at a price to the poor of the world that most of us don't see. An article in The Day this week on Wal-Mart's evil practices in exploiting labor in poor countries of the world makes the point clearly. In the Muslim country of Bangladesh, women work 12-hour shifts 7 days a week making shirts. Wal-Mart pays them 20 cents per hour. That makes it possible for us to get shirts inexpensively, but the price to the poor of the world is a reality from which we are well shielded.

As the gap between the rich and the poor in this country widens, so it widens throughout the world. With it comes a widening resentment of our nation that lives in luxury at the expense of the wretched of the earth. The World Trade Center, the symbol of economic power, and the Pentagon, the symbol of military power, were not random targets but symbols of what much of the world experiences as oppressive. All of these factors contribute to our experience of living in a world that yearns for deliverance from what threatens us.

To put it in biblical terms, we live in a world that yearns for a passover of the plagues of our time, and the one plague of our time that concerns us so deeply now is the plague of terrorism. What can protect us from another attack? I am with those who believe that what we need is nothing short of a new religious revival. Not the kind of fundamentalist resurgence we've been seeing around the world, whether Jewish, Muslim, or Christian. What we need is a religious revival based on learning how to be more caring and sharing stewards of the gifts of God's creation. Our consumption of energy is probably the most critical area. We use energy at such an insatiable rate that we look to the Middle East and say, "Hey, that's our oil!" We cannot expect God to look at the blood we smear on our doorposts and cause the plague to pass over us. If we smear our doorposts with blood, it is the blood of

the earth's poor sacrificial victims that cries out for justice. God will be happy with nothing less than a major change in our lifestyle and stance and behavior.

We live in a time that calls for national repentance rather than trying to destroy those whom we label as representing "a threat to our way of life." Protecting our national interest has come to mean largely keeping the world the same so that the privileged can continue to enjoy their privileges. To follow our calling as Christians to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, we can begin our repentance by abandoning our sense of national entitlement. "We're Americans and therefore we are entitled to be passed over without suffering any consequences even while we continue to do exactly what we're doing." But we cannot expect to be passed over by the plagues of our time when we continue to act as Pharaoh to the rest of the world. We need to test and examine our way of life, and return to the Lord.

Until we come to the point where we can embrace a larger vision of the needs of God's entire human family and not just our own individual branch of it, the threat of terrorism will continue. Until we learn to live as members of a global and interdependent world, war and violence will be the standard means of dealing with conflict. A few weeks after September 11 last year, the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh wrote these words:

The root of terrorism is misunderstanding, hatred, and violence. This root cannot be located by the military. Bombs and missiles cannot reach it, let alone destroy it. Only with the practice of deep listening and compassion can it be transformed and removed. We need a collective awakening to stop this course of self-destruction.

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP THEME OF FRIDAY NIGHT MEETINGS THIS FALL

Friday night meetings for clarification of thought began at St. Francis House on September 6, 2002. Emmett led the conversation to set the tone for the theme of "radical discipleship" with thoughts on the word *disciple* in the New Testament and Christian tradition. Meetings are scheduled for the following Fridays:

September 20	November 15
October 4 – St. Francis Day	November 29 – Thanksgiving
October 18 – St. Luke's Day	December 13
November 1 – All Saints Day	December 27 – Christmas Party

Friday night meetings incorporate the vision of Peter Maurin to hold "round table discussions for clarification of thought." We begin with prayer and Bible study at 5:30 p.m., and have a simple bread and soup supper at 6:00. Conversations begin at 7 p.m. and end promptly at 8:30 p.m. Children are welcome and child care is provided.

Some of our Friday night meetings will be in the nature of **truth forums** which we began last year after the "war on terrorism" became the invasion of Afghanistan. As we get closer to an invasion of Iraq, these conversations about war and peace will come to the forefront again. It's important that everyone have a place for free and truthful conversation about what's going on in the world. Radical discipleship seems to be about issues of war and peace as well as poverty and justice. Join us!



continued....

May God give us the grace in these days of remembrance to seek peace through justice rather than dominance through violence. Only then may we experience a passover for our time.

The Rev'd Robert A. Moore is a United Methodist minister and co-pastor of Niantic Community Church. He preached this sermon on September 8, 2002.



Residential members of the House celebrating Marina's birthday:
From left to right: Chrissy Guarnieri, Sarah Jarrett, Nate Jarrett,
Marina Mills (seated), Anne Scheibner, Emmett Jarrett.

ST. FRANCIS HOUSE WISH LIST

- + Someone to help investigate solar energy in rehabbing 32 Broad St. including finding possible funding sources;
- + Church/group to adopt rehabbing a room - e.g. basement youth rec room, transitional housing unit, office space;
- + Basketball hoop and hard top;
- + Help in designing meditation garden, raised beds on carport, green house;
- + Help in clearing hedges, cutting trees.

IN THIS ISSUE:

St. Francis House: Next Steps

Invitation to Join St. Francis House

Dick Marks Begins Residency

"Send Money!"- Plans for Expansion

*Chrissy Guarnieri, What Is a Retreat and
Why Do We Need to Have Them?*

Anne Scheibner, Mercy Center drawings

Barbara Barrett, The Hardest Part

*Bob Moore, A Passover for Our Time: A Sermon
House Residents' Photo*

St. Francis House Wish List

*Clarification of Thought Schedule for series
on "Radical Discipleship"*

The Urban Networker with news of the
Episcopal Urban Caucus, centerfold



R. I. P.

Anne Dent

1920-2002

One of St. Francis House's oldest friends and most regular participants in our Friday night Clarification of Thought series died in August. Even though her illness prevented her from partaking in the food we shared, she delighted in her tea and never failed to bring Otis his one or two biscuits. We will miss her Irish voice at Evening Prayer and Bible study and will remember her steadfast faith and courage. APS

**Rest eternal grant unto her, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon her.**

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