

# THE CATHOLIC RADICAL



“...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed.” Peter Maurin

December/January 2022-23

Price: For whatever it's worth.

## Mending History

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

Beneath a waxing November moon, Cedric Broken Nose carefully packed his black Suburban with artifacts stolen from Lakota Indians massacred at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. On December 29, 1890, the US Army killed approximately 300 Lakota, a third of whom were women and children, in one of the worst massacres of the US and Indian wars in the nineteenth century. After the battle, the army buried its dead, some 20-25 soldiers, then left the Indian slain exposed to an impending blizzard. Local ranchers, hired by the government, later hauled the corpses into a mass grave, but not before a teamster named Nealy Williams pilfered their clothing and personal belongings to sell as curiosities. And that is how Frank Root, a traveling shoe salesman with a roadshow that rivaled P.T. Barnum's, acquired his collection which he exhibited in eastern cities before bequeathing it to a small private museum in his hometown of Barre, Massachusetts, where it resided for more than a century.

On November 5th, the Barre Museum Association returned the artifacts to descendants of Lakota slain at Wounded Knee. 250 people—Lakota, members of Massachusetts tribes, as well as town folk—assembled in the gymnasium of the Ruggles Lane Elementary School for a remarkable and deeply moving repatriation ceremony which included prayers, the burning of sage, acknowledgement of great wrongdoing, expressions of deep gratitude, and a reclaiming of Lakota history in the American story. “They tried to kill us, but

our spirit is still here,” said Lakota historian Richard Moves Camp.

The inventory of artifacts included a ghost shirt worn by practitioners of the Ghost Dance, beaded necklaces, moccasins, children's toys, and stone pipe bowls and stems. Many who spoke at the ceremony said their repatriation represented for the



Julie Lonnerman

Lakota a return of the ancestors to their rightful place.

According to some accounts, it was a dance that triggered the terrible slaughter. 1890 was a desperate time for the Lakota people. They had lost 58 million acres of their territory to white settlements and were now squeezed into five reservations. Many placed their hope in the Ghost Dance, a religious movement based on the teachings of Paiute medicine men who prophesied a great evil would eradicate the whites and bring an indigenous resurgence. Practitioners believed that dancing the Ghost Dance would hasten the redemptive calamity.

Among the movement's most famous adherents was Sitting Bull, the Lakota chief who led a successful Indian offensive against the US Army at the Battle of the Big Horn. On December 15, Indian policeman, employed by the federal government, fatally shot Sitting Bull when he resisted arrest. After his death, his followers fled to the camp of Chief Spotted Elk, a renowned Lakota diplomat and half-brother of Sitting Bull. Fearing reprisal from US Army, Spotted Elk, took his group of warriors,

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## Israeli Elections

By Jeff Halper

*Editor's Note: The author is an Israeli human rights activist who leads the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions and the One Democratic State Campaign.*

*A fifth of Israeli voters, 1.2 million people, are Palestinian. Another 4.5 million Palestinians live under Israeli occupation and are not allowed to vote in Israeli elections.*

The most surprising thing about the Israeli elections is the surprise and “disappointment” expressed by liberal Zionists, in Israel and abroad. “How could this happen?” Shock at “the most right-wing government in Israel's history.” As if anything has really changed except that Israelis no longer feel the need to dress up their settler regime in liberal, “democratic” terms. The fact that people are surprised means either that they have never grasped the meaning of Zionism—a case of mass self-delusion—or that they are embarrassed by the public exposure of their violent Judaization of Palestine.

In fact, the outcome of the elections was a natural consequence of the Zionist enterprise—indeed, the very culmination to which Israelis have aspired since 1948 (and well before). From its very beginning some 130 years ago, Zionism has been upfront over its intent to Judaize Palestine. To displace the indigenous population and replace it with Jews. To turn an Arab country into a Jewish one. To transform Palestine into Israel.

Casting Zionism as a settler colonial enterprise is not merely an academic

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# Mending

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women, and children to the Pine Ridge Reservation where Chief Red Cloud promised sanctuary.

The US Army intercepted the group within a few miles of their destination and directed them to encamp at Wounded Knee Creek. The next day, when an army officer ordered the Indians to turn in the few weapons they had, some began the Ghost Dance. The gestures triggered the firing of the 500 soldiers who had surrounded the encampment with their fear, their suspicion, and their guns. Among the day's many tragic details was the killing of Chief Spotted Elk, a man who advocated co-existence with the white communities. A black and white photo shows him lying dead in the snow, hands up, his face looking stunned and bewildered.

The US government has formally apologized for the massacre at Wounded Knee. Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warner is calling for the Medals of Honor awarded to soldiers in the immediate aftermath of the attack to be revoked. At the repatriation ceremony in Barre, something more profoundly intimate than correcting the historical record happened. Those whose ancestors suffered a brutal history told their story and showed a new way forward for all of us.

"What happened here today is called *wolakhata* which means peace," said Violet Catches, grand-daughter of a boy who survived Wounded Knee. At the end of the ceremony, to honor the work of the museum board in repatriating the artifacts and to thank all who came to witness the day's event, the Lakota held a traditional *wopila* giveaway. They gave handmade quilts to the board and consultant Aaron Miller, and beadwork handicrafts to everyone in the audience.

I once heard someone describe the universe as God's clothing. When we destroy life, we rend a hole in the garment, a hole that requires our hands to stitch. There are so many to repair now. As of this writing, tens of thousands of indigenous artifacts shuttered in museums across the country await repatriation. It can be done

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# Save Sinjajevina

The small country of Montenegro joined NATO in 2017. Within a year, there was talk of building a military (including artillery) training ground on Sinjajevina, the Balkans biggest mountain grasslands and a place of outstanding beauty. Many of its pastures are governed communally by 250 families of farmers belonging to eight different Montenegrin tribes. The Sinjajevina plateau is part of the Tara Canyon Biosphere Reserve and is bordered by two UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Demonstrations against the militarization of Sinjajevina began in 2018. In September 2019, ignoring the signatures of over 6,000 Montenegrin citizens that should have compelled a debate, the Montenegrin Parliament announced the creation of the military training ground without having done any environmental, socio-economic, or health-impact assessments. NATO forces arrived to train. In November, an international scientific research team presented its findings to UNESCO, the European Parliament, and the European Commission, explaining the bio-cultural value of Sinjajevina. The Save Sinjajevina association was established December 2019.

In October 2020, Save Sinjajevina launched a petition to stop the creation of the military training ground. Farmers opposed to the project held demonstrations in the capital timed to coincide with a visit from the EU Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement. The next day, Montenegro's

Minister of Defense announced plans to build the military training ground.

About 150 farmers and their allies set up a protest camp in the highland pastures to block soldiers' access to the area. They formed a human chain in the grasslands and used their bodies as shields against the live ammunition of the planned military exercise. For months, they stood in the way of the military moving from one side of the plateau to another. Whenever the military moved, so did the resisters. When Covid imposed restrictions on gatherings, small groups of activists stopped the guns from firing. When the high mountains turned cold, they bundled up and held their ground. They resisted for more than 50 days in freezing conditions until the new Minister of Defense, announced the training would be cancelled.

The Save Sinjajevina movement continues to develop local, democratic means for protecting the grasslands from NATO and to engage in public education and lobbying of elected officials. This civil initiative is making necessary connections between peace and environmental protection, and local self-governance.

Opposing military bases is difficult, but crucial to abolishing war. Bases destroy the environment and a way of life for indigenous and local communities. If war is ever ended, it will be because of work like that being done by Save Sinjajevina. We should offer them our support and solidarity. See: [sinjajevina.org](http://sinjajevina.org) Ω

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RADICAL

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*Founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.*

# The Sign of the Cross

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

The sign of the cross opens and closes every Catholic prayer. For Christians, the excruciating form of Roman execution was transformed into a symbol of willingness to give one's life for faith.

As a teenager, after reading "A Man for All Seasons," Robert Bolt's play about the martyrdom of Sir Thomas More, I assumed the ultimate sacrifice would be marked by an opportunity to say inspiring things that would be remembered for centuries. Years later, at Saint Benedict's Catholic Worker, where I tried to prevent a very tough man from stealing a roll away bed, it shocked me to realize that I could have been killed, all by myself, in a garbage-strewn alley. People wouldn't even know why my body lay there. The next day, I asked Jim Wallace, the head of the Sojourners community, if he thought crucifixion was the inevitable consequence of a faithful Christian life. After a full minute reflection, he said, "Yes." To say my enthusiasm for Christianity dipped would be an understatement.

But then, as a Catholic Worker, I witnessed time and again how accepting the risk of the cross, taking a leap of faith, led to remarkably unexpected and strikingly positive results.

On a cold and rainy day in 1988, when Dan Ethier, Sarah Jeglosky, Claire, and I sat at the kitchen table to decide how to make \$375 cover house needs for the coming week, a crying woman came to the door saying that she and her children would be evicted if she didn't immediately pay her landlord \$375. Like all fools for Christ, we gave her the money, then sat in silence wondering how we'd pay for food to feed ourselves and our guests. Just then, another knock on the door brought a well-dressed woman who gave us a donation of \$1,000.

While it's obvious that bread cast on the water doesn't usually come back that quickly, instances like this one in Catholic Worker life have convinced me

that, when the Holy Spirit asks me to take a leap into pitch-black darkness, it's not unbelievable that the Lord of Light will catch me.

On Golgotha, the Apostles assumed,



Daniel Erlander

quite reasonably, that the crucifixion was the end of the road, but the resurrection, and all subsequent resurrections, big and small, remind us that the cross is more of a doorway than stop sign. Many mothers, including my wife, testify that the suffering of labor takes a back seat at the miraculous sight of a newborn baby in their arms.

Luke 6:38 tells us, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure,

pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap." Matthew 11:30 proclaims, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

How can this be true?

When my five-year-old son Patrick and I watched people being baptized during the Easter Vigil Mass, he asked me, "What's going on here?" I gestured to the crucifix and said, "These people are becoming Christians. They go under the water as a sign of willingness to die on the cross." Patrick looked up at the graphic crucifix and said, "Thank God, I'm not a Christian!"

And yet, he did not jump ship. Like me, Patrick decided to hang around a few more innings to see how things turn out. In a way, my son and I are similar to the sick child's father to whom Jesus said, "All things are possible for those who believe," and the father replied, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief."

A cross of small sticks bound together by string, hangs from our car's rear view mirror. I made this cross on Washington, DC's Fourth Street NW in 1983 on the morning after a guest assaulted Claire at Mary Harris Catholic Worker. To help discern how to go forward, we took a retreat day at Virginia's Trappist Abbey of the Holy Cross. While we were away, the angry guest returned, kicked the door in and brandished a long knife with which she planned to wound or kill Claire.

Who could have imagined that two years later, 400 miles away in Worcester, Massachusetts, this same woman would be instrumental in saving Claire and our first-born son's lives?

Day to day experience in the Catholic Worker movement has demonstrated over and over and over again to me that Jesus told the truth. If we say "yes" to the Holy Spirit, give to those who beg from us, take nothing for the journey, love the enemy, put away our swords, and pray unceasingly, we will see the power and the glory as Graham Greene did in his book of the same name. Ω

# A Death Observed: NPT

by C. R. Spicer

*Editor's Note: The author is a member of Peace Action Massachusetts and the Human Rights Commissioner in Somerville, Massachusetts.*

One hundred and sixty non-governmental organizations observed the 10th Review conference of the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT), August 1-26 and mourned the blocked outcomes. "We are witnessing the death of an international process," said Zia Mian of Princeton University's Program on Science and Global Security.

"That's about right," said Charlie Johnson, of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. "The nuclear weapons-possessing countries are giving the appearance of taking this seriously. They don't want to see the NPT die and all there be left is the (Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons) TPNW."

Unlike the TPNW, the NPT does not prohibit the threat of use of nuclear weapons. In November 2021, for example, ten US strategic bombers approached Russia from both the east and the west, coming within 20 kilometers of the Russian border during "Global Thunder," an annual nuclear command and control exercise. US-led NATO forces likewise conducted rehearsals, "Steadfast Noon," for use of nuclear weapons in October 2021.

The nine nuclear-possessing states currently maintain stockpiles of 12,700 nuclear weapons, down from 25,000 in 2007, when Condoleeza Rice appealed for a waiver for India to accede to obligations of the Nonproliferation Treaty. Jayantha Dhanapala, the former UN Undersecretary General for Disarmament and Chair of the 1995 Review Conference, called it a violation of the NPT where all parties are urged "to ensure that their nuclear-related exports do not directly or indirectly assist

the development of nuclear weapons...."

Last year, in clear violation of the NPT, the US exported to the United Kingdom Trident II SLBM (Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile) fire control system and missile compartments. The US also shared



CHARLES BISSELL  
Courtesy The Tennessean

"You'll Not Get Rich (Rat-TattattaTat) You're in The Arms RaceNow!"

with the UK its W76 warhead design.

In deliberations that would ultimately be deemed overly politicized, and blocked by the Russian Federation, the US delegation introduced language condemning hostilities threatening Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Days after the conference, emergency protocols automatically shut down reactor five after shelling struck a backup power line. The UN Security Council has stationed a fourteen-member mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency at the plant.

Tensions in the Middle East likewise gave pretext to shelving outcomes from the 2015 NPT Review Conference. "It's hard to get 190 some countries to agree on anything," said Brian, a recent graduate from Middlebury College with a MA in nonproliferation studies and counterterrorism. "I don't have high hopes in nuclear disarmament. I don't think it will ever happen."

The International Committee of the Red Cross conducted a survey of 16,000 youths.

Véronique Christory, the Senior Arms Adviser for the Red Cross Delegation to the United Nations, said, "We found it worrisome that more than fifty percent think they will witness a nuclear confrontation during their lifetime. Even more worrisome, when asked what they could do, they said, 'Nothing.'"

"Inter-generational solidarity is not optional," commented Jonathan Granoff, Global Security Institute President, citing Pope Francis on justice between the generations, "but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us."

Observers at the United Nations are welcome thanks to the activists who encamped outside its Geneva Headquarters in the early 1980s. A women-

led mass march to the headquarters passed and exposed bases hosting cruise missiles aimed at Russian cities. Father Carl Kabat, a Catholic Worker and member of the Plowshares Eight, participated. The marchers encamped at Geneva University and were soon kicked off campus, but not before they won a permanent location on the street of the Palais des Nations.

In her dissertation on the role of women's encampments for disarmament, Jenny Clay recalls the tactic's impact on the United Nations. The women's sustained presence on the scene during the disarmament conference of 1984 lent proof to a shift in favor of civil society inclusion at multi-lateral levels. The women drew up maps of meeting rooms and were soon sought after by delegates to navigate the sprawling Palais grounds.

Vanda Proskova, a leader of Youth Fusion and member of the Abolition 200 Working Group, said it well, "The NPT is an old document. We need a new framework, a space where both nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states can create a road map to disarmament together." Ω

# Israeli Elections

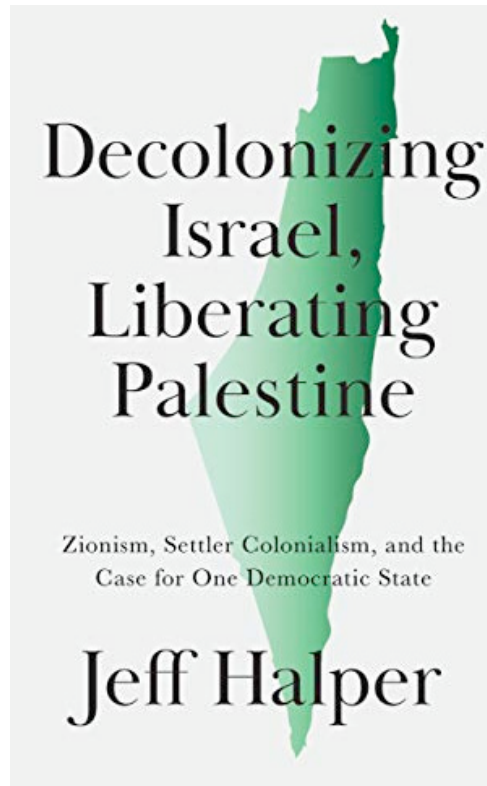
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exercise; it EXPLAINS the necessary and ongoing violence of conquest, displacement, land-grabbing, and ultimate repression, if not elimination, of another people whose very presence poses a challenge to exclusivist Jewish national claims to Palestine. Ben Gvir, odious as he may be, is simply the true face of Zionism that has been well hidden behind the suited and “moderate” politicians: Gans, whose election video a couple years ago featured him boasting of having killed 4,000 “terrorists” in Gaza; Kohavi, the (Israeli

violence against Palestinians that Israel is capable of. Ben Gurion, [first prime minister of Israel] Settler-in-Chief, would have been pleased by those results, but not surprised. Zionism’s supporters, American and European leaders at the head, might be less pleased because the unleashing of Netanyahu, Ben Gvir, and Smotritch will expose their complicity in permitting Israel to carry out its settler agenda with impunity. They must reject the accusation of apartheid presented in painful detail by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, B’tselem, and the United Nations.

Apartheid is today a fact. Zionism’s decades-old campaign of replacing Palestine by Israel has, in Israeli eyes, been accomplished. Israel is now in the process of mopping up. Prime Ministers Netanyahu and Bennett publicly support the annexation of the West Bank (not Gaza, God forbid). Only two things remain: breaking once and for all Palestinian resistance, a task Gans and Kohavi have readily accepted, the IDF and the settlers given a free hand; and the normalization of Israel’s apartheid regime over all of historic Palestine with the help of the international community, including the corrupt and repressive Arab regimes who rely on Israeli surveillance and technologies of repression to stay in power.

So let’s stop pretending that we didn’t know. Ben Gvir, Smotritch, and their cronies are not an anomaly. The upcoming Netanyahu/Ben Gvir government is the “most right-wing” one only in its rhetoric, not in its policies. They are merely the product of Zionism’s 130 years of colonization. Only by formulating a program of decolonization, of thoroughly dismantling the structures of Israeli control and establishing a state of all its citizens (refugees included) can the Zionist project be defeated. The required intellectual honesty and political courage on the part of liberal Jews and “Left” Israelis is, however, totally lacking. It is incumbent upon Palestinians, supported by anti-Zionist Israelis, to mobilize the international grassroots towards the end of decolonizing Israel and liberating Palestine through an inclusive, shared civil democracy. Ω



Defense Force) IDF Chief of Staff who just launched a billion dollar plan to boost the “lethality” of the IDF; Bennett, whose government oversaw an unprecedented peak of house demolitions; Labor and Meretz, the (Zionist) “Left” parties that never mention the occupation; and of course Netanyahu and all the others.

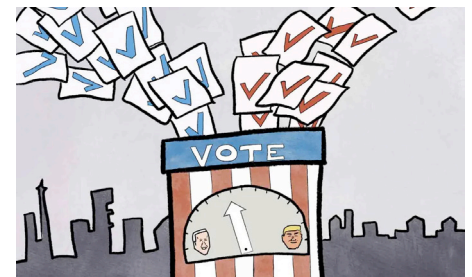
As long as people continue to view Israel as a normal country that just happens to be beset by a “terrorism” problem, they will continue to be surprised by election results and the heights of

# Mending

(Continued from Page 2)

and we can become more whole, perhaps more holy people in the process.

During the repatriation ceremony, Cedric Nose, the great, great grandson of Spotted Elk, the peacemaking chief killed at Wounded Knee, told the assembled crowd he felt honored to be the one transporting the sacred artifacts back to Pine Ridge, South Dakota. He would do it the right way, “the spiritual way,” he said, stopping to pray every several hundred miles or so. I will be thinking of him this Advent, and his history-mending road trip. Ω



# Rigged Elections

Unlike most democratic countries, the winner of the most votes in the United States does not necessarily win the presidential election. In order to appease rural states dependent on slavery, the framers of the US Constitution set up a system called the Electoral College to inflate the power of these conservative regions. Five times in US history, the winners of the popular vote did not win the presidency: John Quincy Adams in 1824, Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876, Benjamin Harrison in 1888, George W. Bush in 2000, and Donald Trump in 2016. Al Gore won the popular vote over Bush by over a half a million votes. Hilary Clinton beat Donald Trump by 2.8 million votes. Even though Joe Biden’s margin of victory was over 7 million votes, 300 Republican nominees for federal office this year say that he did not actually win the election. Many of these people say elections are rigged. Although Catholic Workers are not big on electoral politics, we agree that at least US presidential elections are in fact rigged, rigged in favor of Republicans. Ω

# Dark Sonnet

Reviewed by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

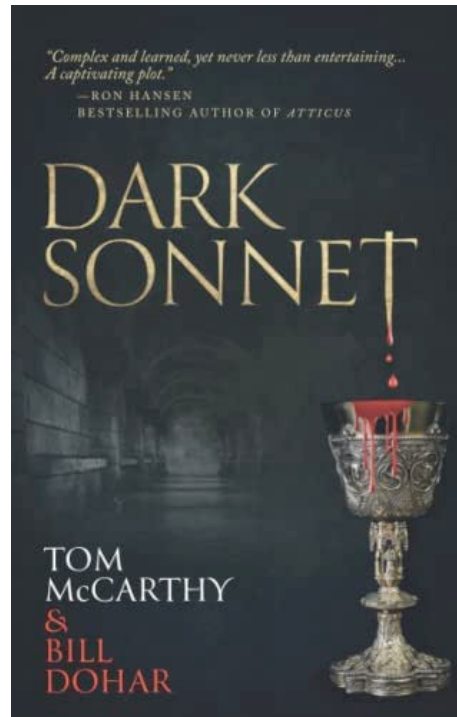
**Dark Sonnet** by Tom McCarthy and Bill Dohar, De Profundis Books, 2022.

A murder mystery set at England's Oxford University with a historical backdrop in the medieval period of Cardinal Wolsey and the break with Roman Catholicism, **Dark Sonnet** is at once a good read and important social commentary for our time. Like my book **Haunted**, which uses a ghost story, to explore the history of racism, McCarthy and Dohar employ the writing of Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ to confront contemporary evil. The novel is never heavy handed, but nonetheless pointed in its social criticism. At the same time, its characters are likeable and the story compelling.

The protagonist is a former Jesuit who is drawn into a search for a medieval chalice tied to a Hopkins' sonnet and the tumultuous period after Cardinal Wolsey and King Henry VIII established the Church of England. Religious faith is touched on, but, again, not over-played. The authors are not preachers. The novel struck me as one which could be enjoyed by many readers of faith as well as religious skeptics.

Interestingly, Hopkins' patron was John Henry Newman, who was later made a cardinal. Like Newman, Hopkins appeal extended beyond parochial confines. Hopkins' line "The world is charged with the grandeur of God," reflects a beautiful piece of Jesuit poet's writing near the novel's end:

*Glory be to God for dappled things—  
For skies of couple-color as a brinded  
cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout  
that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches'  
wings;  
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold,  
fallow, and plough;  
And all trades, their gear and tackle trim.  
All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows*



*how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past  
change.  
Praise him.*

My only criticism of **Dark Sonnet** is that either the authors or their editor chose not to employ the Oxford comma in a book set in Oxford, a shocking grammatical faux pas in my persnickety book, one you might have noticed was avoided by Hopkins in his sonnets.

One of the authors, Tom McCarthy, faithfully attended a Bible study held at Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker back in the 1980s. I always enjoyed his commentaries and am glad to see that he co-authored a novel with such a good spirit at its center. In our deeply divided times, artists, literary and otherwise, can draw our hearts and heads back to more collegial (no pun intended) times. I encourage all of our readers to buy a copy or even copies (it would make a nice Christmas gift) of **Dark Sonnet**. Ω

## Letters

ABCDEF G H

Hello Friends,

I really liked and appreciated the article "New Zealand Bishops on Palestine." Having been in Palestine and Israel, I learned that the solution is most difficult and yet necessary.

Thank you for the mission you have chosen.

Peace and love,

**Dot Walsh,  
Newport, Rhode Island**

Hi, Scott,

I imagine you knew Tom Cornell. Of course, I've heard of him, but never met him and wasn't aware that we were so close in age, one year apart. Everyone connected with the Catholic Worker seems a courageous soul; just very fine people, in an offbeat spiritual-life village of some sort.

You and Claire pulled off another neat issue [of the *Catholic Radical*], with admittedly my liking best Karen Pajer's "Running Every Town in Massachusetts." I had to quit running in 1989 when my knees started to go, albeit running down mountains (never up) was not the best, plus I did an immense amount of long distance biking too. I don't advise anyone following my regimens but at the same time regret none of it. Blessings to you,

**Joan Thomas  
Salt Lake City, Utah**

Dear Scott,

Your article on priests in the August/September *Catholic Radical* brought to mind the words of Cardinal Newman which my brother used for his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a priest and which was also used for his obituary.

"To live in the midst of the world  
without wishing its pleasures;  
To be a member of each family,  
but belonging to none;  
To share all the sufferings; to penetrate

all secrets; to heal all wounds;  
 To go from men to God and offer  
 Him their prayers; to return  
 from God to men to bring  
 pardon and hope;  
 To have a heart of fire for  
 charity and a heart of  
 bronze for chastity;  
 To teach and pardon, console  
 and bless always;  
 My God, what a life!  
 ‘You are a priest forever’”  
*Cardinal John Henry Newman*

Thank you for reminding us of the respect that is due them.

Proud sister of a priest,

**Paula O’Neill**  
**Worcester, Massachusetts**

Dear Friends,

Do me the favor of joining my complaints to the *National Catholic Reporter*, *Commonweal*, and *America* for neglecting our nefarious meddling in Haiti for 200 odd years, but particularly now when the most recent era has led to chaos, gang rule, and new Canadian/US/French plans to meddle once again to prevent Haitians from governing themselves, as Aristide and Preval demonstrated they could.

**Bill Slavick**  
**Portland, Maine**

Dear Scott and Claire,

As I read “Is Better an Enemy of Good” in the latest edition of *The Catholic Radical*, I was struck by the similarities between your message and that of a Marcus Aurelius quote: “It is a ridiculous thing for a man not to fly from his own badness, which is indeed possible, but to fly from other men’s badness, which is impossible” (*Meditations*, vii, 71). In fact, I draw much hope from secular philosophies and ideals that my generation —Gen Z— has espoused, and I maintain that these “new” value systems undeniably reflect the Gospel message, however often this resemblance is denied. Despite his alleged persecution of early Christians, I believe Aurelius was unknowingly recapitulating the Gospel teachings on stewardship, righteousness, and “[removing] **the plank from your own eye**” (Matthew 7.5) in much of

his writing, and I am forever in awe of the pervasiveness of Divine Truth and Inspiration. The climate emergency and other pressing trials of the modern world should be faced with a sense of personal responsibility, but it is more comfortable to operate at the level of scapegoating and shoulder-shrugging—fleeing from other people’s badness.

I am inspired by your writing, the work that you do in your community, and your whole-hearted embrace of the Gospel. Thank you for all that you do and for reminding your readers that “when many people do small things for justice, their actions accumulate into something significant.”

**Jon Bock**  
**Worcester, Massachusetts**

Dear C.W. Editors,

It being Mission Sunday, perhaps you’ll be interested in the enclosed missionary newsletter. The writer, Father Bob Thames, mentions that he uses an electric car. Bolivia, where Father Thames is serving, happens to mine lithium, a key mineral for electric car batteries.

Regarding your journal, the picture of the woman holding the Palestine/Ukraine sign reminded me of a banner I created for a Latin American solidarity demonstration back in the 80s. In those days, I was a young militant pacifist. It read: “Two might’s don’t make it right. USSR Out of Afghanistan. US Out of El Salvador.” A Soviet sympathizer said he would not participate in the demo if the


banner remained unfurled. A woman with Pax Christi told me she would be willing to hold the banner with me.

As you know, a young Dorothy Day celebrated the triumph of the Bolshevik revolution. Much later in life, she published her support for the Cuban revolution, and its ideals. In these post-Vietnam military action days, as war was never declared, I wrote the New York CW, among others, for clarity about their position on Cuba. Especially in the 60s. I found it difficult to believe that a CW house would offer hospitality to Cuban refugees. Tom Cornell responded with a five to six page letter. I suspect that some CW’s support land reform over the wanderings of people such as Peter Maurin or Saint Francis.

**Michael Marek**  
**Jonah House Catholic Worker**  
**Dallas, Texas**

*Editor’s Note: Dorothy Day, like all compassionate people, praised efforts to diminish human misery and increase social justice. As a Catholic Worker, she rejected class warfare and violence, but, like Jesus, she stood with people of different ideologies when they did good.*


*After a trip to Nicaragua in 1983, we praised some aspects of the Sandanista revolution and criticized others, an approach which drew opposition from those on the left that felt anything less than 100% endorsement of the Sandanistas fed into right-wing support for rightist Contra rebels. We disagreed then and still do.*



**Catholic Worker  
Calendar**

**December 6 & 20, January 4 & 18 — Evening Prayer:** Please join us for prayer & Taize chant. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow. 7 PM.

**December 18— Christmas Caroling:** Please join us at 5:30 PM as we bring Christmas joy to seniors at Saint Mary’s (if the virus allows) and to neighbors. Weather permitting, a Christmas fire will follow outside with hot chocolate and cookies. Gather at 52 Mason Street.

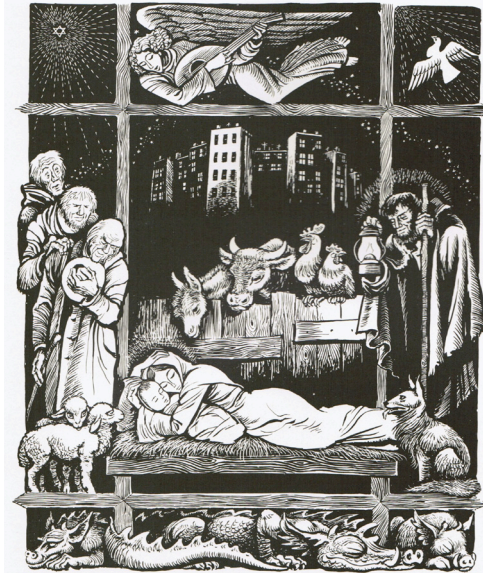


# Mason Street Musings

The co-founder of the Catholic Worker, Dorothy Day, was a Catholic, pacifist, and anarchist. She went to daily Mass, opposed all war, including World War II, and never voted. This was in a time when many Catholics believed there was no salvation outside the Church, and yet many Catholic Workers, then and now, have diverse views about faith, nonviolence, and political action. At the 2008, 75th anniversary Catholic Worker gathering, a speaker said it was our moral duty to vote for Barak Obama. At the October 2022 CW gathering in Worcester, a speaker wondered about endorsing Plowshares demonstrations which damaged weapons while condemning anti-racist protesters who set police cars on fire. The sex abuse scandal and exclusion of women from the priesthood has also prompted some Catholic Workers to reject the Church.

Given the disparity between Dorothy's ideals and those of some Catholic Workers, one might expect that the recent gathering in Worcester would have been

quite contentious. Yet, that was not the case. One workshop in particular, on Catholicism and the Catholic Worker, a



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potentially divisive topic, proved to be just the opposite. Thirty participants, not only shared from their hearts, but also listened

closely to everyone else. The sincerity of each participant brought tears to several eyes. A feeling that everyone in the room, perhaps because of their common service to the poor, was a member of the Catholic Worker family was palpable. I believe everyone left with more respect for each other and more openness to the Church.

Last Sunday's Gospel reading featured a short and wealthy tax collector named Zacchaeus who climbed a tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus. Tax collectors were despised as greedy collaborators with the Roman occupation, and yet, Jesus decides to eat in Zacchaeus' home. Christ's unpopular gesture prompts Zacchaeus to pledge to give half of his wealth to the poor and repay those he had overcharged four times over. The spiritual yearning that Zacchaeus demonstrated by doing something as unseemly as climbing a tree established a bond with Jesus. He does not say only perfect people are welcome in his company. The Son of God's decision to dine with Zacchaeus proclaims hope for all imperfect people. We do not need to struggle toward holiness on our own.

In this time of deep political and social division, the spirit that pervaded the Catholic Worker gathering in Worcester can help us navigate a way toward an affirmation of humanity as a family.

God bless all of you who read this paper. No matter what your faith or lack thereof, no matter your politics, no matter your race, no matter your gender, no matter your sexual identity, no matter your economic and educational background, no matter anything that could divide us, the fact remains that we are siblings in one family created by a loving God. Forgetting that leads to suspicion, hatred, oppression, and violence. Remembering it makes sense of loving enemies and doing good to those who hate us. Remembering it breaks down barriers.

When Jesus chose to become our sibling on Christmas, he made all human beings members of the Holy Family. May this awareness contribute to a very merry Christmas and happy new year for you all! Ω

Scott

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