



# St. Francis / St. Joseph Catholic Worker

Spring 2008

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

## Journey to the White House for a Catholic Worker

President George W. Bush invited Father Mark Schmieder, Board Chairman of SFSJ CW House and President of the American Catholic Correctional Chaplains Association, to attend the ceremony of welcoming for Pope Benedict XVI at the White House on April 16, 2008. Yes, *our* Father Mark.

"I was astounded to open my email 11 days before the event to find that I was invited," Father Mark recalls. "And I was more astounded to find that I'd passed the background check", he joked. But it wasn't until Father Mark left for D.C. on April 15<sup>th</sup> that he realized that 10,000 other people received the same Presidential invitation.

And when Father Mark arrived at the White House on April 16<sup>th</sup>, his astounding experience continued. Upon presentation of identification, Father

Mark was ushered ahead of the vast crowd into the "gold rope" area where he found himself only 50 feet from Pope Benedict and President Bush.

Father Mark described the setting as, "a lot of pomp, with three



bands, Fyffe & Drum Corps, and a harpist to accompany the solo "Our Father". It was totally impressive."

*Journey continued on page 2*

## ***Journey, from page 1***

Father Mark admitted having mixed feelings in the presence of the President and the Pope, both of whom he views as not being totally responsive to the needs of the times.

However, Father Mark acknowledges that the Pope did make a significant impact when he addressed the issue of clerical sexual abuse to the Bishops and when he personally visited with some sex abuse victims. And Father Mark prays for more of such actions.

Among the many issues the Holy Father addressed were the issues of immigrants, human rights, and values.

The Pope also quoted from his preferred theologian, St. Augustine, stating, "Do not do to others what you would not want done to you, cannot in any way vary according to the different understandings



that have arisen in the world. Human rights, must be respected as an expression of justice, and not merely because they are enforceable through the will of legislators."

## **Thanks to Eagle Scout Sam Kolis**



***Nancy, Sam and Conrad Kolis at  
the Eagle Court of Honor***

We salute and thank Sam Kolis for the completion of his Eagle Scout Service Project reconstructing the courtyard of the House. Sam, a Roger Bacon senior and honor student, planned, developed, and lead a team he recruited for the heavy duty cement repair work. Sam and his team have improved our property's safety, hygiene and look. We congratulate Sam's parents, Conrad and Nancy Kolis, as Sam joins his brother Pete in attaining the Boy Scouts of America's highest honor.

# **HUNGER WALK**

## ***May 26th***

The Freestore/Foodbank is again sponsoring the annual Hunger Walk and 5K Run on Memorial Day, May 26<sup>th</sup>. Please walk for the St. Francis/St. Joseph Catholic Worker House. Last year, we had fun trying to out do each other or even taking shortcuts when health dictated! And the free refreshments at the finish line are outstanding.

Last year we earned over \$900.00 for our food account.

### **Meet at Pike & Third Streets, Lytle Park.**

Pick-up packet: 7:00 - 9:00 a.m.

Runners step off: 9:00 a.m.

Walkers: 9:03 a.m.

10:30 - Awards & Refreshments etc.

12:00 - Taste of Cincinnati begins.

### **How to Register:**

**Online:** [www.freestorefoodbank.org](http://www.freestorefoodbank.org)

**By Phone:** 513-482-3663 with credit card

**On Race Day:** At the registration booth.

**Mail-in:** Call 513.381.4941 for a form.

### **Entry fee:**

Before May 13<sup>th</sup> :

\$20.00 w/ T-Shirt, \$15.00 wo/ shirt

After May 13<sup>th</sup> :

\$25.00 & \$20.00

### **NOTE:**

**Please say you are walking/running for the St. Francis/St. Joseph Catholic Worker House and we will get the credit.**

# **Dorothy Day's Faith**

..... *by Brennan Hill*

Faith is talked about a great deal at our house. It is faith that helps us overcome our addictions; faith that moves us to get up and work each day; faith that gives us the courage to reach for our goals and count our blessings.

Dorothy Day's faith can be an inspiration to us.

Her faith came at a great price. In her youth, she had fallen in love, got pregnant, had an abortion, and then suffered a failed marriage with an older man. In the early 1920s, Dorothy fell in love with Forster Batterham, an anarchist, atheist and lover of nature. Again, she got pregnant. Dorothy began to pray for the gift of faith and thought about having her baby baptized so that the child wouldn't flounder in doubt and immorality as her mother had done. But Dorothy knew that if she had her baby baptized she would lose Forster, who wanted nothing to do with religion.

The baby came—a girl and they named her Tamar, the delight of the couple's life. One day when Dorothy was wheeling the baby in a carriage, she met Sister Aloysia. The two women instantly became close and the nun began to give Dorothy instructions in the faith. Eventually both the baby and her mother were baptized into the Christian faith.

Dorothy knew well that if she embraced the faith she would lose the man she loved, and she did. Forster left her. She had to spend the rest of her life as a single mother, with no man in her life.

It was Dorothy's hard-won faith that got her through and gave her the courage to spend the rest of her years serving the poor and the homeless. Her spirit is in our house and gives courage and inspiration to us all.

# **He Felt Good When He Could Make Me Laugh:**

## *A Mother's Story of Unending Love*

*(We chose to print the following testimony by the mother of a one time guest of the SFSJ CW House, Rick, who was not successful in his full recovery)*

My best memories of Rick are his coming over every Sunday. I would cook dinner and he and I would sit on the deck and talk. And sometimes we would take a walk through the woods while taking pictures of animals and nature.

My son, Rick, came into this world fighting for his life and made his entrance in a mighty big way. He was a breech birth and weighed in at 9lbs 10.5 ozs. He was beautiful. Rick had dark curly hair and green eyes. He was very intelligent. He was easy going and excelled at everything he tried. Rick was an avid reader all his life. It seems he had a desire to search for meaning of the most difficult things.

He was a wonderful listener. He always took interest in what was being said, because he listened with his heart.

Rick's passion was restoring old cars.

And he did many. Everyone loved his work. He put his body, mind and soul into each job, which had to be perfect.

Rick was in and out of treatment and AA for years. He did maintain sobriety for a few months at a time. When Rick chose to drink, he would lock himself away in his apartment and drink for days. Therefore he lost jobs, apartments, etc. He became deathly ill each and every time. I saw my son in DT's and withdrawals more times than I care to remember.

One of Rick's many attributes was his generous spirit. He was always willing to help others, especially feeling compassion for those less fortunate. He had an infectious personality and had the ability to bring me to tears from laughing so hard at his stories. He told me one day, that he just loved telling me things that made me laugh because in turn it made him feel good. These days, I find Sundays very lonely and empty.

Rick's last drink brought death with it. He was 47 years old. My life and many others will never be the same without Rick in it.

### **The Wolves**

An old Sioux man was trying to describe to his grandson what it felt like to be an elder.

"It takes strength," he said.

"I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart.

One wolf is vengeful, angry, and violent. The other wolf is loving and compassionate."

"Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?" asked his grandson.

"The one I feed," he replied.

### **Principles at the CW House**

Albert Schweitzer, the humanist, philosopher, and theologian, stated: "The most powerful thing is example. It is the only thing." We at the SFSJ CW House strive to lead by example and expectation. We believe that is why over 1/3 of our guests move onto independent living with a job and a place to live.

**We thank all those who support  
and donate to the House.**

# Each One, Teach One to “Get a Better Life”

An alumnus of the House, Ron Brown writes: “Thank you for the opportunity to restore my life and for showing me how to be accountable and responsible. Before November 26, 2007, I had given up on life and was losing all hope.”

Ron’s journey from hopelessness to productivity and peace began with another former guest’s suggestion, “Why don’t you get a better life? Why don’t you go to the SFSJ House?”

This question and this idea were posed to Ron on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 by another House alumnus. Ron recalls, “George was living at St. Francis/St. Joseph Catholic Worker House at the time and just walked up to me when I was sitting on a bench in Washington Park. He asked me those questions and told me it could be better for me.

Two days later, on Monday, November 26<sup>th</sup>, I decided to do it. I asked for a bed at the SFSJ House, and I decided to get a better life. I had drunk and drugged for 32 years; I am 52 years old now.

Karl and the staff at the Catholic Worker House treated me with kindness and respect. They revealed to me a better way of living and they showed me by example that it was possible for me too. I opened my heart to God and was

shown His wondrous gifts and blessing. My life began to drastically change — I now walk in faith and trust, living a day at a time.

At the CW House I achieved employment, opened a bank account and had enjoyable fellowship with the



guests and the staff of the CW House.

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008, I moved up to Charlie’s’ ¾ House and have continued in my sobriety, my AA meetings, and I have two sponsors. I never thought it was possible.”

We thank Ron for telling his story and we thank George for reaching out and sharing his experience of the SFSJ Catholic Worker House. Each one has now taught not just one.

## CW House Needs

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

"The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference.  
The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference.  
The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference.  
And the opposite of life is not death, it's indifference."

– *Elie Wiesel*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Mark C. Schmieder**

**Brennan Hill**

**Joyce Kiernan**

**Michael Harmon**

**Arlene Turner**

**House Manager:**

**Karl Fields**

## OUR MISSION

St. Francis/St. Joseph House of  
Hospitality strives to provide hospitality to  
homeless men. We recognize that God created  
each human being with great dignity and respect.  
The community of those of us who live and work  
at St. Francis/St. Joseph House of Hospitality  
desire to uphold this principle and  
to serve our guests accordingly.

( Rev. 12/11/98)

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