

GLASGOW CATHOLIC WORKER

'Faith, Works, Love, Mercy'

North Korea, Christian involvement, risk and finding St Magnus

In this issue, as the darker nights of Autumn draw in we can't help but reflect on North Korea and America. The whole scary situation exposes the lies talked about in defence of nuclear bombs (see the adjacent article '*North Korea on the brink or, what happened to deterrence?*'). We think about how Christians should respond to this face-off with the help of Caryll Houselander in '*A Christian can't worry about being safe*', page 6.

On the back page we see similarity between 'Where's Wally?' and St Mag-

nus in 'Free St Magnus!'

Christian symbols hijacked by groups with a far-right ideologies and the mixed messages this gives is looked at in '*The Christian's place in the Antifa, from Charlottesville to Perth*' (below). (Antifa stands for anti-Fascist action).

And finally we consider how such simple things as seeds can raise serious issues about the way we want to relate to nature in '*Seeds for Contemplation*', page 4 ,with apologies to Thomas Merton.

The Christian's place in the Antifa, from Charlottesville to Perth

There exists a common misconception about Catholic Workers suggesting that we do not directly participate in politics. Rather, we'd prefer to 'build a new society from within the shell of the old', rejecting the norms of

parliamentary democracy.

To a certain extent, this is true. Indeed, most of us Catholic Workers here in Glasgow do not vote in elections. Some others are tax resisters due to the fact that their Christian pacifism renders paying taxes for militarism, (and voting) incompatible with such convictions.

Yet, this does not mean that we do not directly participate in politics. Our foundress Dorothy Day was heavily

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North Korea on the brink or, what happened to deterrence?



Silly me thought that the nuclear bomb is only a never-to-be-used deterrent, a final guarantee of our national security

etc. Now here is Trump threatening to obliterate North Korea with it. Something has gone wrong, it seems.

Actually, nothing has gone wrong. This paradox always was inherent in the theory of deterrence. In order to deter an enemy from doing something, you've got to make him think that you will actually use the Bomb. So, you develop characteristics of usability - undetectability, lethality, and accuracy. But if you develop characteristics of usability, your weapons become er, more usable. They become a weapon just like any other.

So much for the theory. But Kim Jong-un didn't just suddenly appear on the world stage, like the demon king leaping out of a trapdoor in a panto. He is a product of a particular history, which is generally ignored. In the 1950s, during the "forgotten war" the USA dropped 635,000 tonnes of bombs on North Korea including 35,000 tonnes



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September's witness in Buchanan Street

← *continued from front page*

of napalm - more than in the entire Pacific Campaign of WWII. Gen. Curtis LeMay led this carnage. He had already carpet bombed Japan in summer '45, and would later go on to fame - or infamy - for the bombing of Vietnam, under the catchy slogan "Bombs Away with Curtis Lemay". During the Cuban Crisis, LeMay was an outspoken critic of President Kennedy and of Robert McNamara. He chastised them for being too lenient.

Le May's attitude to Cuba was "let them fry". He was the model for the character General Jack D Ripper in Stanley Kubrick's film Dr Strangelove.

That this massive destruction of North Korea resulted in a xenophobic, American-hating state with an obsession with

developing powerful weapons systems to ensure national survival, is not exactly surprising. The western media treat the existence of the Kim Jong-un regime as an inexplicable and eccentric manifestation of evil. In fact, it is caused. Unless those causes are addressed the situation can never be resolved.

"EVERY SOLDIER THINKS SOMETHING OF THE MORAL ASPECTS OF WHAT HE IS DOING. BUT ALL WAR IS IMMORAL AND IF YOU LET THAT BOTHER YOU, YOU'RE NOT A GOOD SOLDIER."

CURTIS LEMAY

Whatever the problem, the answer is not to burn people in a far away country. The North has repeatedly said it will get

rid of its nuclear weapon, if America stops rehearsing an invasion, and starts talking instead. Trump must stop acting like the Cowboy in the White Hat, and try some diplomacy instead.

Brian Quail



August and our yearly retreat to Pluscarden Abbey near Elgin. A communal meal is a grace from God.

'Meals are so important. The disciples knew Christ in the breaking of bread. We know Christ in each other in the breaking of bread. It is the closest we can ever come to each other, sitting down and eating together. It is unbelievably, poignantly intimate.' Dorothy Day



Taken at one of our recent monthly visits to Faslane to witness for peace and the end to nuclear weapons. Comforting to note that guns are banned, nuclear bombs are ok though.

Get involved:

Round Table Discussions

On the 3rd Tuesday of every month we meet to discuss a topic and help us together to clarify our thoughts.

We meet at 6:15. Please email us for details of where we'll be meeting.

Soup Kitchen

Help out at our weekly Soup Kitchen in Cadogan Street, Glasgow City Centre

Place of Welcome for Refugees: Saturdays 9am-1pm

Help teach English at Garnethill Multicultural Centre (Basement) 21 Rose Street Glasgow or just socialise.

Monthly Witness at Faslane Nuclear Submarine Base

Join us on the first Saturday of each month at 2:30pm outside the South Gate.

Website:

www.catholicworker.org.uk Email: glw@catholicworker.org.uk

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involved in the civil rights movement as well as protests and in support of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union.



Brian Quail being arrested at Coulport . The bag on Brian's head is for the midges and not a clever disguise.

More locally, Brian Quail, one of our Glasgow Catholic Workers, was recently locked up for non-violent direct action against Trident. Brian was jailed for refusing to accept restrictive bail conditions which would have stopped him from attending our monthly Catholic Worker witness for peace at Faslane.

Similarly, Glasgow Catholic Workers have protested against militarism here in Scotland and joined CND marches in Glasgow.

Yet, it's not all one way traffic, that is to say, it shouldn't just be about us Christians joining secular political campaigns and movements. Rather, we should always bring our own values to the wider justice and peace movement.

For example, we know all forms of rac-

ism are gravely immoral, and many prominent Catholics -both clergy and laity – have rightly stated their opposition to the neo-Nazi rally in Charlottesville. Equally, xenophobia, anti-Muslim bigotry, anti-Semitism and sexism are not compatible with Church teachings. You simply cannot be Christian and support fascism.

Despite this obvious fact, to look at some media outlets, we could be forgiven for thinking that the 'Antifa' are dangerous anti-clerical communists. While the Alt-Right

are standing up for Christian values and western civilisation like the chivalrous Crusader knights of old. Hence, the Scottish Defence League's use of Christian flags and symbols at their recent anti-Muslim demonstration in Perth last month.

In reality, these Fascists are waving the flags of our saints St George and St Andrew, not for Christianity but their own agenda. They are using Christian images and language in the name of hatred. We must reclaim the cross of Jesus from those who would blaspheme our Lord with the sin of racism; this is our duty to our neighbour and our baptismal responsibility as Christians. Or, as the great Abraham Heschel once said, 'indifference to evil is worse than evil itself'.

Even so, perhaps we should not be too hasty to label others as evil without first trying to understand what kind of fear and pain has driven someone to hate. Unlike the militant Antifa, we do not seek the Alt-Right's annihilation, rather we seek their conversion. It is exactly this type of personalism and 'unlimited' peacemaking which Catholic Workers and any follower of Jesus of a Nazareth, are called to bring to the anti-racism movement.

More so, there is an inherent danger which comes from having an 'Antifa' movement which is too narrow, too

Violence.. is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than to convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love."

Martin Luther King

Marxist and too student driven. All people of good will, all people of faith and no faith should be able to look at the anti-racism counter demonstrations and see themselves.

Most of all, our job is to defuse any potential for violence through the application of Martin Luther King's highly disciplined guidelines on nonviolent protest. In the days ahead, it is this discipline which we must bring to each and every demonstration and protest, across the world and here in Scotland too.

So let's come together in solidarity with our brothers and sisters across the political and ideological spectrum and say with one voice: "Whatsoever you do to the least of my people. That you do unto me"

Ross Ahlfeld



Seeds for Contemplation

Weather permitting I like to cycle to work. Prepared with helmet and flashing lights I cycle down busy roads with the inherent danger of being injured by cars, lorries, buses and diesel fumes. However about half way into the journey I enter Pollock Park. The entrance is through a railway bridge flanked either side by high embankments which act as a barrier to the noise and fumes. Some mornings it can be like entering the Garden of Eden, quiet and green and wild with the White Cart Water running alongside the cycle path. Often



I stop as I watch the Clydesdale horses as they are led to their grazing fields, huge powerful animals that accept with dignity being led by their comparatively diminutive keeper.

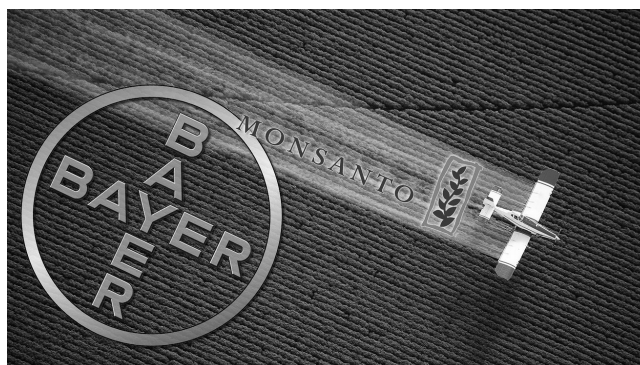
Another distraction on my commute is the vegetable garden with its greenhouses and scarecrow. Being an amateur gardener myself I read the labels which tell you the type of vegetable and variety. Earlier in the year I bought seed potatoes at the Glasgow Potato Day which had for sale over 50 potato varieties. I tried growing a couple of purple varieties called Violetta and Salad Blue both of which surprised me by staying blue after boiling. Growers over the years have developed a huge variety of potato varieties with many different characteristics in colour, size, disease resistance, growing habits and of course taste. Have a look at a good

seed catalogue to get some idea of the variety of potatoes and vegetables on offer.

Peter Maurin the co-founder of the Catholic Worker came from a farming background and had a profound understanding of the way mankind interacts with the land. He was concerned that Capitalism introduced into agriculture a driving force that was not based on need but upon greed, which distorted the delicate balance between resources and their consumption. He saw that the drive for productivity and profit in the farm was marginalizing the necessary regard for the health of the soil.

Coming back to our seeds we can see the way this drive for profit has become a real danger to our future health and wellbeing. Seeds are the basis for everything we eat, whether we are meat eaters or vegetarians. Like many areas of human interaction, seeds were up until 20 or 30 years ago freely shared and an amazing range of varieties have been developed. Yet this basis has been used to develop companies who now want to control this very fundamental resource. Imagine if you could control seeds like people have tried to control water turning a basic human need into a commodity.

Six big corporations control the world's seed, pesticide and biotechnology industries. These companies



are colossal and they are hoping to become the big three. For example the proposed \$66 billion merger between Bayer and Monsanto would

It is not just that they are 'too big to fail'; they are too big for an equitable, civilised society - and, when they operate in an area as essential to life as food production, they are life threatening.

Pat Thomas is the founder / director of Beyond GM . She is an author, journalist and campaigner and a former editor of The Ecologist.

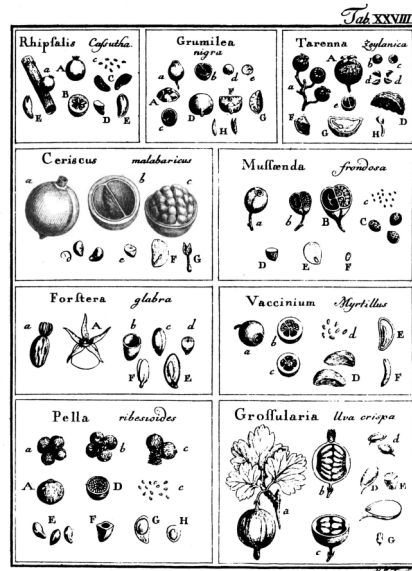
make it the world's biggest company for both seeds and pesticides. During World War I, Bayer was involved in the development of chlorine gas, one of the first chemical weapons. Monsanto was involved in the production of the deadly herbicide Agent Orange in the 1960s which was used in the Vietnam War. Many have said this is a marriage made in hell and indeed there is much about principalities and powers talked of by St Paul in this coming together of like minds.

An example of how these agro-chemical companies make a killing is that they produce genetically modified seeds which are resistant to weed killer which means they get a significant price for their seed and sale for their weed killer. They use "Terminator" technology which produces genetically modified plants that have sterile seeds, which do not flower or grow fruit after the initial planting, requiring customers to purchase new seed from Monsanto for every planting in which they use Monsanto seed varieties. This seed grab by the big corporations means we will become more and more reliant on fewer and fewer specific types of seeds. Their pesticides are already creating serious problems for the bees and as they get more

and more control we will have less and less choice. And with monopoly prices will go up. This "has far-reaching implications for global food security, as the

privatization and patenting of agricultural innovation (gene traits, transformation technologies and seed germplasm) has been supplanting traditional agricultural understandings of seed, farmers' rights, and breeders' rights." (UNCTAD)

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church 2415 it says; 'The seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation. Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity (Genesis 1:28-31). Use of the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives. Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbour, including generations to come; it requires a religious



respect for the integrity of creation.'

Dismissing these developments as 'that's business' or 'this is progress' or 'this is the future' is not acceptable for a Christian. We know our future and must work for the Kingdom of God. We resist by the way we live. Changing the world starts with changing ourselves so we must scrutinise the food we grow, buy or eat. We cannot leave the future of our food to big corporations whose motivation is profit at the cost of the earth. God gave mankind stewardship of creation, not Monsanto and Bayer.

Michael Sutherland

Extract from Modern Farmer

Tom Giessel, who farms winter wheat, corn, and sorghum on 5,000 acres in Larned, Kansas says "It got so easy to buy technology instead of utilizing your talents, your gifts, your knowledge, your own intelligence,".

"I think it really made farmers sloppy. You could be a sloppy farmer and put this magic spray on, and be fine." The limited number of choices available to farmers, says Giessel, forces a one-size-fits-all approach.

This system of highly limited sources doesn't reward farmers for learning, really learning, how to farm their own

land: what specific crops work best for them, how the weather operates on any given day, how the soil needs to be treated to produce optimal yield. Even if they wanted to learn that stuff, they can't: They buy the Monsanto seeds and spray them with Monsanto pesticides, because there are no other options.

"Rapid consolidation of the private seed sector has coincided with the erosion of hundreds of independent seed sellers across the countryside,"

And the Bayer-Monsanto deal just exacerbates an issue that's been steadily growing in the past two decades: even fewer choices, less competition, and more pressure on farmers.

Regard for the Soil

Andrew Nelson Lytle says:

"The escape from industrialism is not in Socialism or in Sovietism.

The answer lies in a return to a society where agriculture is practiced by most of the people.

It is in fact impossible for any culture to be sound and healthy without a proper respect and proper regard for the soil, no matter how many urban dwellers think that their food comes from groceries and delicatessens or their milk from tin cans.

This ignorance does not release them from a final dependence upon the farm."

Peter Maurin

Diversity

The generous rainfall and clean air to be found in Scotland provide favourable conditions for the growth of 'lower plants' - ferns, mosses, liverworts, lichens, algae and fungi.

Scotland is home to around 1,900 lichens, 66 ferns and allies and 1,000 mosses and liverworts (37%, 45 % and 58% of the European diversity respectively). All of these are spore-bearing or cryptogamic (literally 'hidden sex') plant groups.

Royal Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

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A Christian can't worry about being safe

"Everything is now on a gigantic scale, evil is so terrific that is almost passes belief, such relentless cruelty, such destruction – what can answer it? Surely not a tepid Christianity, not a compromise? No, only absolute Christianity, undiluted, heroic, crucified love, which stops at nothing and is ready to give everything, including itself"

Caryll Houselander



With the South Korean peace group in George Square Glasgow

A number of weeks ago I met a South Korean peace group/political party (Peoples Democratic Party) who were in the UK to meet and discuss their political agenda – having American and all western troops leave South Korea, and encouraging the US and North Korea sign a peace treaty immediately. We had a long discussion about the history of South and North Korea, the impact of various occupations (such as the Japanese occupation of Korea), the impact of both American and Russian involvement, and the current, very tense situation. The peace delegates were adamant that the only way for-

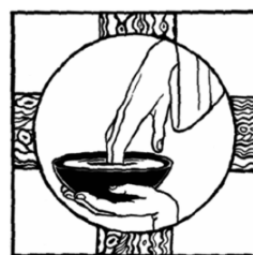
ward – after such a complex and harrowing history – was for all western troops to leave South Korea and to do so immediately.

I realized in the course of the conversation that I felt a bit of discomfort. While I agree whole heartedly with the need for a peace treaty – I realized I had reservations about the thought of all western troops leaving South Korea. I asked the head of the peace delegation what would happen if all troops left and the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un, invaded South Korea, and she said "no – that wouldn't happen. He would no longer feel threatened and he wouldn't invade us. He would know that invading us would end up with both North and South Korea obliterating each other, and he wouldn't want that either – so we would all be able to build peace." She argued passionately that the only way towards peace was having the west make the first step in complete disarmament – she was very "Catholic Worker" in her understanding of non-violence, putting me, a self-proclaimed Catholic Worker, to shame.

I have pondered this a great deal. Why do I feel discomfort with the idea of withdrawal of troops? My discomfort lies in the fact that I don't feel any confidence that Kim Jong Un will not invade South Korea – indeed I don't feel any confidence that he won't use weapons to destroy other parts of the world. From the fragments we know about North Korea – testimony from those who have escaped and the rhetoric used by Kim Jong Un – combined with the violent rhetoric being propagated by Donald Trump – I have no confidence that even the withdrawal of troops can de-

escalate the situation. While I can't pretend to have any real understanding of the motives, background, and mental state of Kim Jong Un, I also can't pretend to have confidence that he is a man peace. However – and this has taken some soul searching to come to – whether or not withdrawing troops leads to a peaceful solution or an escalation might not be the crux of the matter – on the contrary, as Christians we are called to do the right thing, the peaceful thing, the Kingdom thing – regardless of outcome, regardless of risk.

The issue of "risk" is an interesting one – what does it mean to take the risk of non-violence? As Catholic Workers we



believe that we are mandated by Jesus to treat each other gently – on an individual level, a family level, a community level, and international level. We don't accept that any war is necessary. Traditionally, the Cath-

olic Workers have protested all use of troops, weapons and violence, in conflicts ranging from World War II to the Vietnam War and beyond. The issue of World War II had the impact of breaking up some Catholic Worker houses as not all believed we should be peaceful in this situation – some Catholic Workers felt that this was the "exception" to non-violence. However Dorothy Day held firm – no exceptions – Jesus mandated that we be peace makers – and as hard as Christianity might seem –



Dorothy Day

right is right, Christ is Christ – and there are no exceptions.

Where do we stand in our current hot-

bed of political violence? With Trump and Kim using explosive language, with nuclear bombs festering in all corners of the world, and with the almost daily terror attacks in Western Europe and the Middle East – who are we, as Catholic Workers and as Christians? The South Korean peace delegates really pushed me on this question, and I have turned to Caryll Houselander for inspiration.

Caryll Houselander, often called the “divine eccentric” and a glorious Catholic writer of the mid-20th century, was not technically a pacifist during World War II but she did have some strong words about the need to follow the Sermon on the Mount – words she wrote in the middle of the Blitz with carnage all around her, and words that can inform our thinking today. According to Houselander “probably the most potent of all the causes of hate is fear”. Fear is an emotion which even in private life can drive people of a naturally mild and sweet disposition to commit murder. There is no need to dwell on the causes for fear affecting us all now, we all know them. We all know how

terrible they are, how constant and how real. There is no cowardice in admitting that we are afraid, indeed we should not be human were we not. But we ought to realize that this fear, unless we face it and learn to understand it and even manage it, will lead to hate”.

Houselander’s words, written more than 60 years ago, resonate today. How much does fear inform my discomfort with the idea of all western troops leaving North Korea? How much does “fear” inform my willingness to take risks, to be radically Christian, to follow the Sermon on the Mount? Houselander follows up her words regarding fear by stating that “If there ever was a time when we can not only take the Sermon on the Mount literally, if we want to, but can hardly avoid doing so, the time is now.” The time was “now” for her during World War II and the time is “now” – early 21st century - for us.

violent world.

Therefore I have come to the conclusion that as hard as it is, as fearful as I



Caryll Houselander —a self portrait

am, the South Korean peace delegates are right. We cannot compromise, we cannot give in to fear. We must act with complete non-violence and the heroic Christianity referred to by Houselander. We must support all disarmament because that is the only Christian, Godly action that will help to build our Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven. And certainly, we know that like Christianity itself, the non-violent method has not been tried nearly enough in this world that groans and travails on a daily basis. Another great Catholic writer, GK Chesterton, once said that “Christianity has not been tried and found wanting – in fact it had hardly been tried at all”. I think the same claim can be made for global, non-violent alternatives to war. Perhaps this situation with North Korea will finally be the inspiration for a peaceful and sane alternative to solving disputes. Perhaps the very danger will finally wake this crazy world up to options other than violence. As my Jewish friends would say “from our lips to God’s ears”. Pax Christi.

Tamara Horsburgh



St Ignatius Loyola by Caryll Houselander

What does it mean to take the Sermon on the Mount seriously? It means that we must be peacemakers; we must be meek; we must love our enemies, thirst for righteousness, and act on love as opposed to fear. We must mourn and feel blessed even when others persecute us. It calls on us to have, in Houselander’s words “not only for a virile Christianity, but a heroic Christianity.” A heroic Christianity – very hard to embrace but perhaps the only sane way forward in this

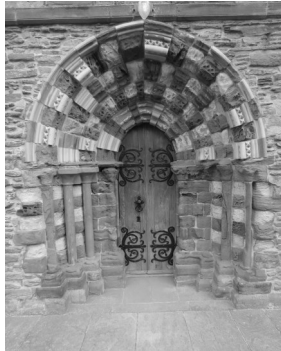
Free St Magnus!

There are many saints who stand out for me and whose life is an inspiration. I pray to saints asking for them to pray for me, as I would ask other Christians to pray for me. A saint whom I recently came across when on holiday in the Orkney Isles in the north of Scotland was Magnus.

Magnus and his cousin Haakon shared the Orkney earldom but the two of them didn't seem to get on. Eventually in Easter 1117 they met on the island of Egilsay in the hope of achieving reconciliation. Both sides agreed to limit the number of men they brought, but Haakon broke this agreement and brought ships full of armed men. Magnus refused to allow his men to defend him and instead tried to settle the matter

peacefully, praying to God for assistance.

To Magnus his murder would be a grave sin and Haakon would bear the guilt. He offered Haakon alternatives to this killing even to the point of offering to be blinded, maimed and cast into a dungeon. Haakon seems to have liked this option but those around him demanded Magnus'



death and so Haakon's cook Lifolf was given the task. Magnus' last words to Lifolf were 'Take heart, poor fellow, and don't be afraid. I've prayed to God to grant you his mercy.'

With this in mind I made my way to St Magnus Cathedral built in his honour. I've got to say how shocked I was that the Saints relics were very difficult to locate. I eventually asked a guide who pointed to spot about 50 feet up a pillar. Apparently his relics were dis-

covered during renovation in 1919 in this location. They had been put there during the reformation. Those who found them promptly put them back. I am sure this hiding place was never considered a permanent resting place by those who hid them there. As a Catholic who believes in the communion of Saints, I would have at least put them in a side chapel available to pilgrims to let them meditate on his life and example. Maybe we need a campaign to free St Magnus!

When you look around today at so many men of war who use violence as a means to an end it is good to pray to Magnus. And so I pray to St Magnus to ask Jesus to let those who would use violence see that there is another way, a way that will bring real peace, the peace of Christ. Amen

Michael Sutherland

