



Schedule of Events:

Please consider joining us for the following

Weekly– Shared Prayer, Tues. and Thurs. evenings at 5:30 pm, 3722 Baudin St.

Weekly– Day Labor Breakfast, Wed. at 7:30 am, 4738 Palmyra St.

October:

4, Community Meal at 6:30 pm, 3722 Baudin St.

5, Pax Christi Peace Mass, at 7:00 pm, St. Gabriel Church 4700 Pineda St.

7, LSU/VA Hospital Lawsuit Update at 6:30 pm, 3700 Canal St.

20, Bible Study: Enacting the Kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel at 7:00-8:30 pm, 3722 Baudin St.

23, Clarification of Thought (Health Care for the Poor) at 6:30 pm, 4738 Palmyra St.

24, Garage Sale Fundraiser 8:00 am-3:00 pm, 4315 Cleveland St.

November:

3, Bible Study: Enacting the Kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel at 7:00-8:30pm, 3722 Baudin St.

6, Community Meal at 6:30 pm, 3722 Baudin St.

13, SOA Watch Demonstration Sign-Making at 6:30pm, 3722 Baudin St.

17, Bible Study: Enacting the Kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel at 7:00-8:30pm, 3722 Baudin St.

20-22, SOA Watch Demonstration and Vigil, Columbus, Georgia

December:

1, Bible Study: Enacting the Kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel at 7:00-8:30pm, 3722 Baudin St.

4, Community Meal at 6:30 pm, 3722 Baudin St.

15, Bible Study: Enacting the Kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel at 7:00-8:30pm, 3722 Baudin St.

18, Clarification of Thought (Parable of the Talents) at 6:30pm, 4738 Palmyra St.

Neighbors and Strangers

By Dan Thelen

Early one morning, Paul and I were bringing breakfast to the workers at Home Depot. I stood apace until a man approached me smiling and we struck up a conversation. We chatted, and I learned he was from Guatemala and came here daily to seek work. We continued talking before the reason for his friendliness struck me – this man is my neighbor! I laughed as I recognized Oswaldo anew from the few times I'd seen him sitting on his front porch since he moved in. It was a simple conversation, and I enjoyed his warm heart, easy-going friendliness and engaged manner as he spoke.

I began to greet Oswaldo when I saw him next door. One day as we were talking, Joe stepped in to invite him to dinner that Katy had just prepared. What a great idea! Over the meal, we put our broken Spanish to work and the three of us grew a step closer to our once foreign neighbor.

I felt compelled to sit down with

Oswaldo and hear more of his journey and experience coming to the US. I understood little about what such a journey is like and wanted to know what drove him to do something so seemingly risky.

So, he told me his story. Friends encouraged him to undertake this journey with promises of abundant work and vast wealth waiting for them in the United States. The cost was a whopping \$6000 secured by a bank loan that Oswaldo was sure would be quickly paid off. After a day's journey by bus to the Mexican border, he walked through the night with his group across the desert. Once in Mexico,

their group met up with another and now totaled 110 people. The coyotes, paid guides, packed them all into a semi-truck with only apples and water as sustenance for the 10 day ride to the US border. Once there,

the journey across would have to be taken on foot. For four days and nights they traveled through the desert with scarcely any food or water. Oswaldo described the



By Rita Corbin

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The Scheme for Charity Hospital

With the national eye now more clearly focused on the crisis of health care in the US, a movement in New Orleans to secure accessible healthcare through the re-opening of Charity Hospital is gaining momentum. The hospital on Tulane Avenue in the downtown area has a long history of service to the poorest in our city. Although it was one of the first buildings restored to service by the Army Corps of Engineers, four years after Hurricane Katrina and the failure of the levee system it still stands vacant. Across Gravier Street, the VA Hospital mimics its' pose.

A broad coalition of citizens groups have united in favor of reopening of Charity Hospital and in opposition to the planned demolition of nearly one-third of the lower Mid-City neighborhood to build a new VA facility and a new, research-oriented LSU-led Medical Center - replacing the current University and the vacant Charity Hospitals. The vibrancy of the rally and march held on September 2 by these groups and their supporters demonstrates a continued hope by New Orleanians for access to

quality healthcare and a renewal of democratic government institutions.

Lawsuits have been filed, one of which alleges that the City violated its charter in promising land to the VA without Planning Commission approval. Another alleges the illegal closure of a state hospital in the case of Charity. LSU Health System is accused of strong arm tactics - including closed door meetings and neglect of a restorable hospital - in an effort to increase its institutional clout. The lawsuits have teeth, but the City, VA, and LSU - not to mention the Governor and now Tulane Health System, which inked an agreement with LSU after a dispute over the composition of the proposed Medical Center's board – are formidable adversaries.

These have tried to quash dialogue and replace public scrutiny with limited public comments. We wholeheartedly support reopening Charity Hospital and denounce the planned demolition of 34 acres in the lower Mid-City area. We also encourage our readers to attend the October 7 meeting for an update on the lawsuits. Ω

NEW ORLEANS CATHOLIC WORKER

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Dan Thelen
Paul and Sue Troyano

Promoting
Downward
Mobility

The Catholic Worker, One Year In

By Joe Heeren-Mueller

In her autobiography *The Long Loneliness*, Dorothy Day described the development of the first Catholic Worker community in New York's Lower East Side as transpiring in the course of those sacramental moments at a common table. Having just marked our first year of communal life and prayer together as the New Orleans Catholic Worker Community, I am grateful for the moments of shared prayer and meals that bind us closer together in friendship and inspire us to lives of deeper service.

The Spirit's movements are sometimes tricky to discern, but she has been a dynamic presence in our growth. Initially, our ambitious goal was to acquire in short time-frame a large house suited for community life and hospitality for several guests. Having spent several months considering potential houses without finding one that fit both our budgetary and structural requirements, we have refocused our work of late.



Inspired by Peter Maurin, cofounder of the movement, we have looked more closely at the works of mercy and examined ourselves in their light. Have we fed the hungry and given drink to the thirsty? How can we visit the sick and imprisoned? What does "clothing the naked mean" today? Who is "the Stranger" and how do we welcome her? How do we take personal responsibility for burying the dead?

As Christians our communal spirituality should be embedded in these works. We are off perhaps to a good start. Between February and April, Lawrence, a traveling artist, shared about six weeks with us. He, in turn, lent us his gentle spirit and colorful sketches and paintings. We enjoyed long conversations about life on the streets of Rio de Janeiro and the object of our ever-searching souls before he returned to England to look after his grandmother. This summer, we began distributing sandwiches and water to dozens of our neighbors – many undocumented migrants – who gather outside of a local chain hardware store hoping to find work. We are grateful to those who have joined us in making and sharing these small offerings with us and our friends. Our door is open to neighbors who visit with increasing regularity. Some just chat, others stay for dinner.

Our monthly meetings – or clarifications of thought – have settled now on the third Friday of each month. Paul and Sue host these meetings at their house. They have included a comprehensive presentation on the Israeli siege of Gaza, by Audrey Stewart and a ranging discussion of the campaign to save Charity Hospital led by Brad Ott. Chris and Kevin Cahalan, Bill Quigley and Toni Balot also led dynamic discussions this past year. We look forward to hosting Dr. Mary Abell from the St. Thomas Health Clinic in October and I will help break open the economics of Matthew's parable of the talents in December. We are planning a garage-sale fundraiser for October 24 and we continue to pray that Spirit will lead us to a home that we can renovate into a house of hospitality. We welcome your participation and contributions.

Reflecting back on our first year in community together, blessings abound. Katy and I married in January and since that time we are grateful to have taken on a much increased role in raising my son, Cylis, who is nearly two. Dan spent much of the summer working and learning at a spiritual center in New York State. Paul and Sue recently celebrated their 25th anniversary. Sue has returned to school after a relaxing summer and Paul continues to craft artisan woodworks. Ω

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planes flying overhead, the threat of robbers and police, the hunger and thirst. Several in Oswaldo's group became sick.

After 20 long days, he made it to Arlington, Virginia.

"What was your first thought upon arriving?" I asked him. "Was it excitement, fear, relief?"

"None of those," Oswaldo said. "I missed my family. I thought, why am I here?"

Five years later, Oswaldo has traveled many states in search of the work that he dreamed of in Guatemala. To date, he has but one story of a woman paying him handsomely for a week's worth of work. The rest of his experience has been a struggle just to find work; often people underpay him or sometimes pay nothing at all. Because of the interest on his loan, he still has \$2000 to pay on his loan, and hence no money to send to his family. The reality he has encountered is far from the American dream he was promised. Instead, the journey has been marked with discrimination, exploitation, and disappointment.

Oswaldo's story is unfortunately common, though he has known friends who have found success here. His story is one of millions of migrants, all of whom have amazing courage to undertake costly journeys. They call us to reexamine how our attitudes and social structures prey upon the poor and the stranger. As a Church rooted in attaining justice for the poor, we must seek ways to support, and empower, the stranger, the immigrant, our neighbor in our midst.

"Was it worth it?" I asked him.

He shook his head. "I don't like it here. There is no work." He is sitting tall with a characteristic smile on his face and gentle warmth in his eyes that, for a moment, turn red. "I miss my family." Ω

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