



**Order of Christian Workers**

## *JOURNEY*



We wish to emphasize inclusiveness and kinship...to serve others in common journey... to honor fellow-pilgrims in struggles and hopes... to risk toward the possibility, passion and compassion of community—regardless of religious belief, age, gender, race, economic circumstances, or personal orientation...to include the poor and the outcast...to learn from those who choose to share community with us...to celebrate exuberantly in solidarity.

*We welcome you to join us on the journey*

### **MARCH 2008**

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## [Quick News Round-Up....](#)



**Don't forget the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Easter Egg Hunt!** For kids [of all ages, sizes, shapes] on **Saturday, March 22, 2:00 p.m.**, at Hosanna House at Sanctuary...lots of prizes, food, and goodies!

**Special Prayers are asked** for an 18-year-old young woman whom we have known since she was a wee lass...born with HIV/AIDS...struggling with depression/isolation; what a lovely person she is...and we know you'll carry her in your heart....

We are also involved with a 14-year-old girl who attempted to hang herself; as she goes through the long and difficult recovery [presently in ICU], we know that she would be encouraged by your heart's concern and hope....

**Tally from the Annual Children's Christmas Party:** With **thanks to many of you**, we ended up providing gifts, clothing, and food to **403 children** [and their families] this past December! Additional thanks to the many new and veteran **volunteers**...to the cadets from the **Culver Academies** who traveled a thousand miles to help [and who raised funds to adopt 30 kids!]...and, as always, to the **staffs** of the various area **children's medical clinics** and **outreach agencies** who work so hard to refer children to us. If you have not seen the wondrous **video** [created by volunteers] of the '07 Party, simply click on the link below [and be sure to watch **all** of it!]:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVBRzb68AeM>

**Christmas Goodies in February/March!** As many of you know—even though we rarely emphasize it—the work for the Annual Children's Christmas Party goes on *throughout* the year...and we've been finding some recent shop-till-you-drop **70%-off** toy sales...so thanks to those of you who continue to support us monthly, as it helps allow us to save lots of money for the December ministry....

**OCW Continues to serve** in the alliance with the Benevolence Center; **food and clothing** are continually offered openly to those who need it; O.C.W. is presently providing [at least] **2,900 pounds of food** per month!

**New Board of Trustees!** At the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, we welcomed four new members, who joined some of the “veterans”—even though *all* of the Board members have a strong history of support and work with the OCW. The new Board:

Brenda McWilliams, President  
Troy Carlyle, Vice-President  
Robin Kelly, Secretary  
Sunny Matthys, Treasurer  
Sandy Mason, Assistant Secretary  
Elise Cowan  
Mary Ann Trammell

The Board offered its “official thanks”—but more importantly, its **personal thanks**—to **Br. Robert Hericourt** for his *long* service to the Community; Robert will continue his great help to all of us, although he wanted to be relieved—at least temporarily—of his “official” Board functions.

**LOTS of Work Ahead!!!** Given the constant use of the buildings and other facilities at **Sanctuary** over the past few years [Community events, summer camps and swimming for kids and families, seasonal events, etc.], we have to face the fact that **dramatic maintenance and upkeep work** is strongly needed...and so we’re purposely setting aside big chunks of time and energy this spring for repairs: roofing, insulating, painting, restoring, plumbing, and on and on. While there are no huge, *single* repairs, there are enough smaller ones to keep us busy for likely three months...in our “spare time.”

**A great gift for others (or yourself!):**

The poster of  
“To Follow the Christ”

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/theposter.html>

# Unsolicited Comments & Meanderings



## ON BLURTS...AND HEROES

**[blurt, verb: To speak suddenly or sharply, as from surprise or emotion]**

I recently read an article which caught my attention.

It seems that researchers had studied some of the activity of the frontal lobe in men's brains [specifically men in their "older years"...like me], and they concluded that there is a mechanism in the frontal lobe of *younger* men which somehow "polices" blurring ["inappropriate" and "impulsive" statements *out loud*]...but that this policing mechanism seems to dissipate in older men—and, voila, we find that geezers tend to offer "verbal opinion" that is not always appreciated by unsuspecting listeners [i.e., family, friends, loved ones, other geezers, etc.].

I'm finding that to be increasingly true.

I'm not sure if my thought patterns have changed [I doubt it...and I know that I've been a "quasi-blurter" through much of my life]...or if my "policing mechanism" is wearing thin—or if, after several decades, I'm simply not willing to listen to folderol ["B.S." in everyday terms] as a passive listener.

Last week, in the midst of the excitement and chaos of state presidential primaries, I happened to visit the local garage to have some minor repairs done to the van; the proprietor—a friend of fifteen years—was busily going about his chores, so I took a news magazine into the waiting room to pass the time. Shortly thereafter, my friend sat down, as we began discussing the political climate [we have fairly opposite views on

such matters, but always agree to disagree]...and then an older man walked in and sat down between us.

My friend addressed the man [who was obviously someone he knew quite well], asking him if he had voted yet.

“Certainly have...and I’d vote twice if I could...*anything* to keep that n----r from getting nominated!”

I stared *hard* at my magazine momentarily...instantly reviewing all of the “acceptable” behaviors that I’ve learned throughout my life [you know what I mean, huh?]....but then I found myself—almost uncontrollably—blurting [forcibly]:

“*WHAT* did you just say?! Did you just say ‘n----r’?! In this public place, did you say you’d do *anything* to keep ‘that n----r’ from being nominated?!”

He gave a quick retort: “Well, I guess that’s the way I was raised....”

“But now you *are* raised...so don’t you get to be civil?”

He offered no response...but was clearly startled...as was my friend.

But I continued:

“I don’t have to listen to that crap any more...I don’t have to pretend that it’s okay to use that word in my presence...so I’d rather stand outside....” And I did.

But I did more than stand. My mind was racing, asking me *all* the life-long questions: My own civility? My own compassion? My own arrogance? My own prejudices? My training as a “non-judgmental” listener? My role as a priest!!!

Finally, though, as I self-answered all of that stuff [with “appropriate guilt-feelings”], I did have to admit that I appreciated the blurting...sort of glad that the “frontal lobe police” were not quite as diligent as before.

My friend, who witnessed all of this, came outside and asked me if I was okay. I thanked him for asking...and said I was just fine.

“You know, Padre,” he said calmly, “he’s just an old guy who really didn’t mean what it sounded like....”

“I am, too, my friend...and I guess I meant *exactly* what it sounded like.”

After shaking hands with him, I walked to the van...feeling somehow like I had just participated in The Two Old Blurters at the O.K. Corral. Even with my propensity toward psychologizing, I tried to accept my new frontal lobe “condition” on the way home.

## **A HERO AS A HUMAN**

I have a folder in my computer labeled “Heroes.” I purposely visit it often, if only to remind myself of those who—in my mind and heart—give me clues to the meaning of “true human beings.” The contents are a wondrous collection of the famous and the personal...some I’ve met, some I’ll never meet, and some I see often. Many of them were—or are—compassionate blurters.

One prominent entry in my folder is that of Paul Moore, Jr. [1919-

2003], former Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of New York, and world-famous advocate for the poor, the ignored, and the outcast. This brilliant Yale graduate, World War II Marine hero, and father of nine children was also a consistent blurt to the powers that be...and he brought distant courage to many who battled through the issues of poverty, militarism, racism, sexism—as well as igniting a new flame of spiritual expression. He has been a spiritual father to me for decades.

On March 3, 2008, *The New Yorker* magazine published an article [“The Bishop’s Daughter”] by his oldest child, Honor Moore, in which she reflects on her relationship with him over four decades...and comes to realize that her father had been a “closeted” gay man. It is, in my mind, a beautifully written memoir—full of love, gratitude, sadness, and joy—and I hope that you might consider reading it; you may do so by following this link: [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/03/03/080303fa\\_fact\\_moore/?v=1](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/03/03/080303fa_fact_moore/?v=1)

Tomorrow evening, I will be attending a supper of a group of friends—who happen to be gay, and who dine together publicly in local restaurants, partly to simply socialize as friends...but partly, too, to socialize *publicly*, just as “we straights” would do on any given evening. I’m honored and grateful for the invitation—and I hope that I will have the opportunity to “blurt” something positive and supportive about my bishop-hero...so that his wondrous life of service may be an inspiration to them, too.

Thank you, God, for the lives of *all* your saints, regardless of what labels we put on them.

Love & Blessings,

*Fr. Tom*

## ✠ *Your Prayers Are Asked* ✠

✠ For those who struggle through continuing medical, surgical, and spiritual processes ✠ Those courageously in recovery of addictions ✠ Those living with HIV/AIDS ✠ Those who caretake others ✠ Those adults and children who have no home ✠ Those involved in wars throughout the world ✠ Those struggling to transform their lives within the criminal justice system ✠ Our brothers and sisters at Walker House ✠ The women and children at the Crisis Center ✠ The patients, families, and staff at Women’s and Pediatric Clinics ✠ The children who are living in poverty and malnutrition, lacking medical care ✠ Those “undocumented” brothers, sisters, and children who share our work and lives ✠ Those who grieve various losses in their lives ✠ Those who care for the children in families, foster care, and institutions ✠ Those who suffer from fear, hate, and

prejudice ✘ The families of those who have died from violence, as well as those who are being executed daily ✘ Those who struggle against the rape of Creation ✘ Servant-Leaders and Companions who live in solidarity with OCW throughout the country ✘ Those who give us continuing models of Christ-work: Andre House (Phoenix), Casa Maria (Tucson), Starcross Community (California), and the many Catholic Worker Houses (both Catholic and Roman Catholic) throughout the US and world ✘ Peacemakers and Holy Fools....

## Hmmmm....

What is your truth? Ask your heart, your back, your bones, and your dreams. Listen to that truth with your whole body. Understand that this truth will destroy no one and that you're too old to be sent to your room. Move into your truth as though it were an old house. Walk through each room. See, hear, and feel what it is to live there. Try to love what you find, and remember the words that come to you as you explore. If you embrace it, if you are faithful to it, your truth will reward you with unimaginable freedom and intimacy with yourself and others. You won't land in a world made to order; some people in your life may not like what you write. But those who remain will be allies, people who breathe deeply and listen. It will feel good to be seen completely and loved as you are. As Natalie Goldberg said after her friend found and read a piece of work-in-progress that she had left out from the day's writing, "I feel good because I don't care that she sees how I really am. I'm glad. I want someone to know me."

*John Lee*

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day; I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.

*Edgar Guest*

Do not depend on the hope of results. You may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea, you start more and more to concentrate not on the results, but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself. You gradually struggle less and less for an idea and more and more for specific people. In the end, it is the reality of personal relationship that saves everything.

*Thomas Merton*

In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit.

*Albert Schweitzer*

For money you can have everything it is said. No, that is not true. You can buy food, but not appetite; medicine, but not health; soft beds, but not sleep; knowledge but not intelligence; glitter, but not comfort; fun, but not pleasure; acquaintances, but not friendship; servants, but not faithfulness; grey hair, but not honor; quiet days, but not peace. The shell of all things you can get for money. But not the kernel. That cannot be had for money.

*Arne Garborg*

## AND OUR REMINDERS

What would you gain if you were to win the whole world but lose your *self* in the process? [*Jesus of Nazareth*]

Put greed out of your lives and be content with whatever you have. [*Hebrews 13*]

This is the kind of fast I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts. What I am interested in seeing you do is: sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families.... [*Isaiah 58*]

Ask me not where I live or what I like to eat... Ask me what I'm living for, and what I think is keeping me from living fully for that. [*Thomas Merton*]

Is it your spiritual practice—*each day*—to offer *gratitude* for the blessings of your life?

## Announcements/Info/Quick Links

### DID YOU KNOW?

...That **no one** in O.C.W. has *ever* been paid a salary or “perks” for this work and ministry

...That our only means of gaining financial support has always been *begging*

...That it would be very helpful to us (and to *you*, we hope!) in terms of sending these emails to you if you would include these two OCW mailing addresses in *your* **EMAIL ADDRESS BOOK**: [journey-](#)

[ocwATearthlink.net](http://ocwATearthlink.net) and [ocwjourneyATyahoo.com](mailto:ocwjourneyATyahoo.com).

...That we would *love* to offer prayers of gratitude on your **birth and/or anniversary dates**; simply email us the specifics

...That you can visit the *entire* **O.C.W. website** by going to:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org>

**DONATIONS** to the **Order of Christian Workers** are tax-deductible within the law.

**OUR MAILING ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 4155, Tyler, TX 75712-4155

**OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS:** [journey-ocwATearthlink.net](mailto:journey-ocwATearthlink.net)

**OUR INTERNET ADDRESS:** [www.OrderOfChristianWorkers.org](http://www.OrderOfChristianWorkers.org)

**OFFICE/FR. TOM/SR. MARIA/SANCTUARY:** 903-595-3191; fax 903-595-5183

**FR. TOM'S CELL PHONE:** 903-521-0490

**HIV/AIDS SUPPORT GROUPS** For information, please call the SHRET office at 903-597-7558.

**WILDWOOD COFFEEHOUSE** (Proceeds to various non-profit organizations) Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship; for schedule/further info: [www.geocities.com/uutylertx/wildwood.html](http://www.geocities.com/uutylertx/wildwood.html)

**BIRTHDAY AND/OR ANNIVERSARY DATES** (year not important!):

We'd love to offer prayers on those special days. Please send to [journey-ocwATearthlink.net](mailto:journey-ocwATearthlink.net), or by postal mail.

**PFLAG** (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians & Gays) Further information at 903-330-8901; email address is:

[pflageasttexasATyahoo.com](mailto:pflageasttexasATyahoo.com); mailing address: East Texas PFLAG, P. O. Box 130703, Tyler, TX 75713-0703.



## **ARE YOU IN THE PICTURE(S)?**

Our **PHOTO-SHARING WEBSITE** [over **200** pictures!]

is **really easy to use**: Just go to [www.flickr.com/photos/ocw](http://www.flickr.com/photos/ocw) take a look...and (we hope) send us photos to **add** to it.

The **albums** ("sets") are listed;

once in a "set," simply put your cursor over a **specific picture**, and it will show you the **title** of the picture...

if you wish, you can click on a picture to **enlarge** it.

**Another great option within an album/“set” is to click on “view as slideshow”...and then you’ll get a **timed sequence** of the photos in that “set”!**

**So, please **send us photos!****

**For email, send to [journey-ocw@tearthlink.net](mailto:journey-ocw@tearthlink.net);  
by postal mail, send to **OCW, P.O. Box 4155, Tyler, TX 75712-4155.****

**[www.CommunityPilgrimage.org](http://www.CommunityPilgrimage.org)**

*Have you considered what the possibilities might be  
for your  
parish or church or community?*

## **QUICK-LINKS FOR THE O.C.W. WEBSITE**

**Home Page:**

**<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/>**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):**

**<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/faqs.html>**

**O.C.W. history:**

**<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/ourhistory.html>**

**Our work and ministry:**

**<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/agivenday.html>**

**The Annual Children’s Christmas Party [for 400 kids]:**

**<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/thechildren.html>**

***Journey* monthly newsletters:**

**<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/newsphotos/newsletters.html>**

**Publications [including some free books!]:**

**<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/publications.html>**

**The “To Follow the Christ” Poster:**

**<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/theposter.html>**

**“Community Pilgrimage” program:**  
<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/gatherings.html>

**LINKS Page:**  
<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/links.html>

**Our Prayer List:**  
<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/prayers.html>

**O.C.W. Memorials Page:**  
<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/memorials.html>

## *JOURNEY*

is a monthly expression of the ministry, work, and reflections of the  
Companions of the  
*Order of Christian Workers,*  
an ecumenical, non-denominational and charitable gathering of  
God's children.

*Letters or other contributions are always welcome*

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