

It is shameful to benefit off those who have so few rights

In the recent past the story of the three amigos hit the front page of the *Free Press*. They had come to Canada under the Low-skilled Temporary Foreign Worker Program. This program caters to companies that require workers to fill positions that require minimal education and training and where the local labour market has certified that there is an ongoing shortage of workers in a designated occupation. Work visas are issued on the basis of a contract of employment between an employer and employee for a maximum period of 24 months. The worker is limited to the same employer. If the job is completed before the 24 months are up, there is a possibility for a new contract with another employer if all the papers are in order.

It is ironic that the three amigos were arrested because their employer was being investigated. (The employer has yet to be tried in court) The three men were told they would be deported because the employer had not completed the necessary paperwork. It is interesting to note that the case against the workers proceeded immediately but the employer who was being investigated has not yet gone to court.

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program is fed-

eral. The monitoring of whether the employers fulfill their duties to the workers is left to the provincial governments who are not given a budget to check on the enforcement of the rules. Another program for 'migrant' workers is the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program. The workers may stay up to eight months of the year but are never allowed to apply for permanent residency. They must return to their country of origin at the end of every harvest.

It is a program that is riddled with injustices. The workers are not told of their rights. They must pay Canadian income tax and contribute to the Canadian Pension plan and employment insurance, neither of which they will ever collect. They have no medical coverage and are often paid less than minimum wage.

In 2009 Oblate Brother Thomas Novak helped found the Migrant Workers Solidarity Network which advocates for better working conditions, more respect for the rights of workers and recently health care benefits. At present the treatment of migrant workers helps keep some prices in the supermarket low. It is shameful that we benefit at the expense of people who have minimal rights.

Next Step Peer Support Program

Next Step Peer Support Program is a 2 and a half program for people who have done their time in prison. The first step is a circle of people who work at identifying the root of their problem and re-entering into the every day world. The second step for

some, is affordable and safe housing. Sister Carol Peloquin and Father Dave Kraemer, have collaborated and established Quixote House which offers support and community for people as they try to find work, work or study a trade. The length of time is usually one

year. Then what?

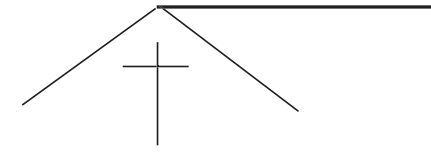
The third step is becoming a reality. The Jesuit Community has bought a fairly decrepit house which is being renovated. The apartments in the house will be available for rent to 'graduates' of Quixote House. If you are inter-

ested in supporting the renovation of this house called The Massie Apartments, please call Micah House (589-5393) for a pamphlet or phone Jan Hasiuk at 474 2351 or Father Dave Creamer at 474-9141.

Micah House 1039 Main St. Winnipeg Ph: 589-5393 www.archwinnipeg.ca



Catholic Centre for Social Justice



UPDATE

MICAH HOUSE

ACT JUSTLY + LOVE TENDERLY +
WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD

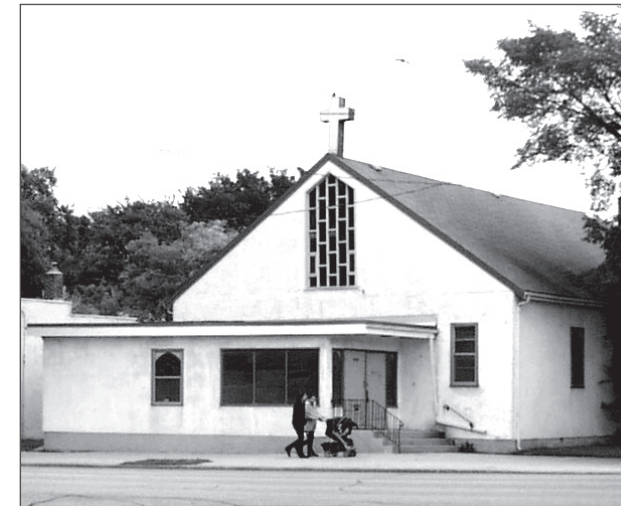
April, 2011

Reorganization at Micah House

In an effort to reach more people of the Archdiocese, the Board of Micah House recently contacted each of the Deanery Pastoral Councils to ask and arrange for a representative from Micah House to be a part of Pastoral Councils. The representatives who attended three of the Council meetings were very happy and pleased with the outcomes.

Some questions came up at the meetings which made it clear that the role of Micah House is not understood by some of the Archdiocese.

From where does the funding come? Sharing God's Gifts funds a part time salary, and the maintenance of Micah House which at one time was called Our Lady of Fatima. For projects, the Coordinator applies to various funding agencies and or Foundations. Micah House is located at 1039 Main Street. Its mandate is



to educate, network with agencies and parishes, advocate and give opportunity for prayer.

The representative of Micah House will act as a bridge between the DPC and Micah House in order that Micah House can be more available to Parishes and their needs.

Other Representatives

In addition to a representative at the Deanery Pastoral Council, each parish has been invited to appoint a person to participate in the ministry of Micah House. This representative acts as a go-between for the parish and Micah House and comes to three meetings a year. At present, the rural representatives do not meet regularly: a lack that must be addressed. The Round Table at the last rep meeting on February 28 brought to light several efforts that are of note.

Our Place/Chez Nous

One parish has recently invited Our Place/Chez Nous to make a presentation to their CWL regarding the Drop-in Ministry there. If any parish is interested in the outreach towards people who are either homeless or almost homeless, please contact Larry Stuart at Our Place/Chez Nous.

It is to be noted that Our Lady of Victory parish

provided a wonderful Christmas dinner for 100 people. The students of the parish school along with confirmation students from St. Timothy's and St. Bernadette's provided many gifts for the guests and St. Charles provided the workers to transport tables and chairs for the dinner. "See how they love one another."

Way of the Cross

Blessed John XXIII has commissioned music for The Way of the Cross. For those who are interested, the prayerfully sung Way of the Cross will take place at Blessed John XXIII on April 15. Further information will follow. All are welcome.

For parishes who would be interested in having copies of a **Way of the Cross based on human trafficking**, please contact Micah House at 589-5393.

Fast for a change

Fast For a Change is a booklet prepared by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. As you know, Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partner with Development and Peace. If you are interested in copies, please contact Micah House at 589-5393 or Canadian Foodgrains Bank at 1-800-665-0377. This pamphlet uses scripture to help people reflect on hunger in our world.

FaceBook

Max Werner has been working to prepare a Facebook page for Micah House. It cannot be found on Google yet, but can be located at the search option. It can also be found in the Micah House section of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg website at www.archwinnipeg.ca

Presentation on Mental Illness at St. Margaret's

Mental illness affects our families and our communities in many ways.

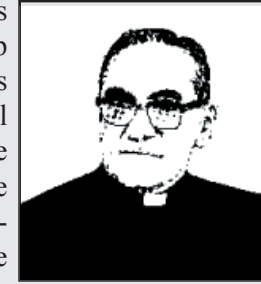
As a way to inform people and to lessen the stigma associated with mental illness, the Social Action Committee at St. Margaret's is sponsoring a presentation by Nigel Bart, a person suffering from Schizophrenia and founder of ArtBeat, and Lucille Bart, mother of Nigel and certified counselor who is convinced of the therapeutic value of the creative process.

Josee Wiedmer, a former participant at ArtBeat, will share her experience of dealing with a Bipolar Disorder through creative efforts.

The presentations begin at 7:30 and will be followed by coffee, munchies and fellowship.

Remembering Archbishop Oscar Romero

It has been 31 years since Archbishop Oscar Romero was shot to death in El Salvador while he was celebrating the Eucharist. He continues to live in the hearts of his people and of people the world over.



Bishop Romero was an unlikely candidate to become a Bishop for the poor. He was a conservative, studious and quiet man. It was only when his friend, Father Rutilio Grande, sj, was murdered by the regime that Romero began to connect with the people his friend had been serving. His ears and his heart were opened to the stories of the people Father Grande had loved and served.

He became convinced that education was a way to sustaining life in El Salvador. The children must be "educated for love, not to aspire to have more but to be more, not to grab everything but to give abundantly to others." (Romero)

Watch the movie Romero. Challenged to reclaim the Blessed Sacrament from a Church which had been desecrated by soldiers, it took him 3 times to gather enough courage to go in all the while being made fun of intimidated and shot at.

During this Lent, let us gather our courage and stand with the outcasts and the poor of our society.

What is social justice anyway?

As a result of my time at Micah House, Catholic Centre for Social Justice, my view of the phrase has both broadened and refocused. There have been people who came to Micah House seeking justice

There are still many people who are afraid of what social justice would require of them. "To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God" says Micah. Isaiah spells some things out for us... "to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free.+ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked to cover them? If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,..."

As we contemplate the list it is normal to be rather intimidated. "I can't demonstrate on behalf of missing and murdered women," some say. Others are fed up with requests for money and still others hold the opinion that there are no poor here in Winnipeg; anyone who is poor here, chooses to be poor.

Somehow, there is a misunderstanding about Social Justice.

Struggling for justice in the courts, in the Church, in the housing and mental health systems, in the welfare system and the economic system seem far removed from what God asks of us. If we add the word 'social' to justice, the area of concern expands even further. There is human trafficking, the abandonment and abuse of the elderly, the shut-ins, the sick, the hungry, refugees, released offenders and the inter relationships of varied ethnic and religious groups.

It is only because God's amazing love for us awakens love in us. We feel compelled to answer God's love by loving all peoples in our daily lives in both small and heroic actions.