**THE SPARROW SINGS February, 2013**

I read in the Feb. 18 edition of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel a letter to the editor in which the writer wrote that, despite a question of morality, it is appropriate and good for the U.S. to use drones to kill off the terrorists. He himself admits that drones have killed and still are killing innocent civilians, but for him morality should not enter into our decision to use drones. The question that could be put to him is how would he feel if someone killed his child in an effort to destroy a criminal in his neighborhood? Would he then feel that the end justify the means? Would he feel that this is fair and appropriate? The U.S. is notorious for doing violence to others to get what it wants. It feels that if you can accomplish your goal by committing inhumane, immoral acts then it is appropriate to use them.. A few examples of this were when we executed hundreds of thousands innocent people in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, My Lai, etc . and continue to do this in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Mali, Niger and other countries with drones, chemical weapons and bombs. And after we commit these immoral acts some Americans have the audacity to ask why other countries hate us. We have yet to learn from Christ, Gandhi, Dorothy Day and others that you do not make friends by doing immoral acts against them. Our best defense is making more and more friends by being kind, compassionate, generous, just and caring for all peoples of the earth. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which should be read by every American, including judges and legislators, torturing others and taking away the freedom of others to live are violations of human rights or, immoral acts. The U.S. agreed to follow this Declaration, but it has lost sight of what it includes. Since it is a treaty agreed to by the U.S. it is a part of the U.S. Constitution and must be followed. Drones, cluster bombs and chemical weapons are immoral in that they do not discriminate between civilians and soldiers. Drones do not allow for a person to be charged with a crime and given a trial. They are simply extrajudicial executions or another violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitution. We must learn that practicing immorality only leads to more immorality. Our violence only leads to more violence. Killing does not prove that killing is wrong. Drones will produce more drones and more immorality and death. The U.S. military has invented a medal for drone “pilots” who from a room with a computer kill people, mostly civilians, without charging them with a crime or giving them a trial and sentencing them to death. -----*AlterNet,* 2/15/13 ------Don Timmerman.

“We have power, a power that cannot be found in bullets and guns, but we have power. It is a power as old as the insights of Jesus of Nazareth and as modern as the techniques of Mahatma Gandhi…The Christian doctrine of love operating through the Gandhian method of nonviolence is one of the most potent weapons available….The Church must be reminded that it is not the master or servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state.”---- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

**JOKES**

A little old man shuffled slowly into an ice cream parlor and pulled himself slowly, painfully, up onto the stool….After catching his breath, he ordered a banana split. The waitress asked kindly, “Crushed nuts?” “No,” he replied, “Arthritis.”

We told our kids that we want to be cremated, but they should wait. I’ve sure gotten old! I’ve had 2 bypass surgeries, a hip replacement, new knees, fought prostate cancer and diabetes .I am half blind. I can’t hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 40 different meds that make me dizzy, winded and subject to blackouts. I have bouts of dementia, poor circulation and can hardly feel my hands and feet anymore. I can’t remember if I’m 85 or 92. I lost all my friends,’ but, thank God, I still have my driver’s license.

A little 5 year old boy had watched his minister father do grave side services. The boy and his friends were burying a dead robin. They turned to the minister’s boy for the final prayer. He said, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and in the hole he goes.”

A wife, being romantic, sent her husband a text, “If you are sleeping, send me your dreams. If you are laughing, send me your smile. If you are eating, send me a bite. If you are drinking, send me a sip. If you are crying, send me your tears. I love you.” The husband replied, “I am sitting on the toilet. What should I do?”

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Feeling sick, my sister grabbed the thermometer from the medicine cabinet and popped it into her mouth. “Uh, Julie, that’s the dog’s thermometer,” said her mother. Julie spit out the thermometer. “Ewww, that was in Fitzie’s mouth?! Mom hesitated before replying, “Not exactly.”

 The woman across from me will NOT shut up about where she works. Ugh, I hate job interviews! I’ve never been swimming. That’s because it’s never been more than a half an hour since I last ate.

**INTERESTING FACTS**

As many as 237 of the 400 wealthiest Americans are counted by House Republicans as small-business owners. Some 82% of the Bush tax cuts were made permanent by the “fiscal cliff” compromise. As a result of the compromise ¾ of Americans will pay a higher tax rate in 2013.

In 2010 24% of Americans identified themselves as Tea Party members. In 2012, only 8% of Americans identified themselves as such. Half of the annual budget of the state of Texas is used for tax incentives to corporations.

The National Rifle Association Victory Fund spent $11,159,493 on the 2012 elections. Americans own half the privately own guns in the world. Some 680 of U.S. children under the age of 13 were killed with firearms between 2006 and 2011. On 3/5/2012 the state supreme court decided that the University of Colorado must allow guns on campus. None of the students elected to live in dorms designated for those with concealed-weapon permits.

Some 4,000 pounds of ram penises were shipped to China from an Icelandic slaughterhouse after an October trade agreement.

Some 30% of the chemical food additives are not tested nor approved by the FDA. Only 2% of the people killed by US. Drone strikes in Pakistan in 2012 were actually Taliban or Al Qaeda leaders.

estimated that 2,000,000 people die from high cho Chance a prisoner seeking a commutation of sentence under President Clinton received one: 1 in 90. Under George W.Bush: 1 in 780. Under Barack Obama: 1 in 6,631. ----*Harper’s Index*, Feb. 2013

There are 193 countries in the world. ----*World Almanac* There are no laws against arms trade in the world. Governments or groups are known to commit atrocities and yet may buy weapons traded on open market and use them with Impunity against civilians. The U.S. has refused to sign the U.N. Arms Trade Treaty due to the N.R.A.’s powerful lobby arm which tells outright lies about the Treaty The global arms trade is a $1,74 trillion-a-year business. That is $250 for every person on the planet. There have been 502 violations of U.N. arms embargoes since they were introduced. -----*Amnesty International*

In the last decade 700 Palestinians lodged complaints of torture done to them by Israeli soldiers. Not a single one was followed up with an investigation or charge. -----*Al Jazeera*

At a Virginia pizza shop, Around Pizzas and Deli, customers who bring in a gun or show a gun permit will get 15% off on their order. They claim about 80% of their customers walk in carrying a since offered the discount. -----*AlterNet,* 2/19/13

The most children born to one woman is 69. The “lucky” lady was a Russian peasant who gave birth to 16 pairs of twins, 7 sets of triplets and 4 sets quadruplets between 1775 and 1765. ----*Trivia Today*

A tank holding radioactive liquid at Washington’s Hanford Nuclear Reservation, the nation’s most contaminated nuclear site, is LEAKING! The storage tanks, which hold millions of gallons of a highly radioactive stew left from decades of plutonium production for nuclear weapons. The leak could be in between 150 and 300 gallons a year. ----CGL News, 2/17/13

The French intervention, assisted by the U.S., in Mali was done mostly for economic reasons. The region has oil, natural gas, uranium and gold. French uranium mines are done already in Niger by French owned Areva, one of the world’s largest uranium mining companies. -----*Portside* 2/4/13 A full-scale invasion of Africa is under way. The United States is deploying troops in 35 African countries, beginning with Libya, Sudan, Algeria and Niger. This was reported by Associated Press on Christmas Day, last year. Most of the major media printed nothing about this.

Over 500 Christian girls have been abducted in Egypt since the revolution of January 2011. They were taken by Salafists who forcibly convert them to Islam and marry them to Muslim men against their will. -----C2NN News, 2/18/13

CITGO-Venezuela Heating Oil Program has helped more than 1.7 million Americans in 25 states and the District of Columbia keep warm since it was launched back in 2005. -----RSN, 2/13/13

A report by Yale University detailed institutionalized patterns of abuse affecting many of the 70,000 Third Country Nationals working in the military and contractors funded by taxpayers. A large number of foreign workers are employed by fly-by-night subcontractors who are funded by American taxpayers. Many of these workers work for less than 25% the promised wages and in untenable working conditions. -----*The New Yorker*, “Invisible Army: For foreign Workers on U.S. Bases in Iraq and Afghanistan, War Can Be Hell.”

The current GAO estimates for delivery, operation and maintenance of about 2,500 F-35 war planes is an astounding $1 trillion. Lockheed Martin in 2009 made about $3 billion and in 2010 made about $2.9 billion from taxpayers for building this plane. ----*AlterNet*

Native Americans on an oil-rich North Dakota reservation have been cheated out of more than $1 billion by schemes to buy drilling rights for the lowball prices, a flurry of recent lawsuits assert. And, the suits claim the federal government facilitated the alleged swindle by failing in its legal obligation to ensure the tribes got a fair deal. ----*ProPublica*2/26/13

The U.S. Air Force is the single largest consumer of jet fuel in the world. The F-4 Phantom Fighter burns more than 1,000 gallons of jet fuel per hour and peaks at 14,400 gallons per minute. Ten minutes of flight uses as much fuel as the average driver does in one year of driving The military reports no climate change emissions to any national or international body. In 1940 the U.S. military consumed 1% of the country’s total energy usage. By the end of WDWII, the military’s share rose to 29%. In Iraq the Army estimated it would need more than 40 million gallons of gas for just three weeks of combat. The full costs of the Iraq invasion, estimated at $3 trillion, would have covered all of the global costs in renewable power generation needed between now and 2030 to reverse global warming trends. The U.S. military consumes as much as 1 million barrels of oil per day and contributes 5% of global warming emissions. Ten of 11 U.S. recessions since WWII have been preceded by oil price spikes. -----*Truthout,* 9/8/11

**NOTE**

**Catholic Worker Cathy Breen (****newsfromcathy@yahoo.com****}, is collecting funds for the many refugees from Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey. These refugees fled from the wars and now have no means to support their families.**

**Please send your donations to Cathy Breen, 55 E. 3rd St., New York NY 10003. Thank you!**

**Each Wednesday we are praying the Stations of the Cross at Marquette U. from 4 to 5 p.m. during Lent to ask them to be faithful to the Gospel and close the ROTC program. Call Don at 342-0158.**

**MARCH 8 -----GLOBAL WOMEN’S STRIKE AND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY. Welfare Warriors will be organizing a Global Women’s Strike BUS TOUR to Madison Wi from noon to 5 p.m. to deliver petitions to the Board of Directors of Child Welfare in Madison to demand they remove Glen Grothman from the board. For more information, call 414-342-6662.**

**MARCH 14 ----STAND FOR NONVIOLENCE AT BREW CITY SHOOTER SUPPLY, 43RD & Lincoln Ave., from Noon to 1 p.m. We are asking people to live a nonviolent lifestyle. Owning or using a gun is a violent act since the purpose of a gun is to intimidate, maim or kill someone. To have a gun means that you are willing to commit an act of violence against someone. Call Don at 342-0158 or Casa Maria Catholic Worker at 344-5745. Data suggests that a gun present in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide for women by 500%. Americans do a far better job of killing themselves than the Al-Quaeda terrorists could. From 2001-2011, there were 3,000 U.S. deaths from outside terrorists. From 2001 to 2011, there were 339,000 deaths from American terrorists. ----*The Progressive Populist,* 3/1/13**

**We ask that you not buy Palermo Pizzas until the company treats its workers with justice and dignity. Contact: Voces de la Fontera at (414) 643-1620.**

**CONCERN OF ROBERTA----Our car has broken down, and it is too expensive to repair. We are fortunate that we have permission to use other people’s cars at this time. We hope that an older, economical vehicle will become available to us. Please contact us if you become aware of such a behicle. We walk in the winter and ride bikes in the summer, but we still end up needing a vehicle for long trips. Thanks!**

**NOTES FROM 21ST STREET:** “The snow has begun in the gloaming and busily all the night had been heaping field and highway with a silence deep and white.” I woke up to a white world this morning. “Every pine, fir and hemlock wore ermine too dear for an earl and the poorest twig on the elm tree was ridged inch deep with Pearl.” These words to a poem I learned many years ago spring to my mind. The poet is James Russell Lowell. All sharp edges were softened by the white blanket that had fallen overnight. It is very, very beautiful. I wish a gentle, loving spirit would reign down on our politicians which would soften the harsh rhetoric and actions that have occurred in our land. If grace and compassion could soften those who write and implement laws the poor and the migrant worker would no longer suffer the harshness of poverty and discrimination. Truly if I awoke to such a world, the wonder and awe at the beauty of the snowfall would melt into joy my heart would feel at such beauty. Peace, Roberta

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