

Dear Friends,

Since our last newsletter, Joseph's House has initiated a gradual but intentional process of change—change that expresses our hope and commitment to significantly deepen and broaden our mission. I am very happy to share our vision and recent journey with you.

We trust that this process will simply allow us to open more fully to Dr. David Hilfiker's call, nearly fifteen years ago—to welcome and become real *community* for, to reach out with compassion and exquisite attention to, those in our city who are homeless and dying. What we learn day by day at Joseph's House is that when we choose *not to protect ourselves* from suffering, when we *turn toward* those who are suffering, when we open our hearts—no strings attached—our energy is renewed, not depleted; we can stay in for the long haul; we can be well and deeply peaceful. In the coming year Joseph's House hopes to share our practice of heartfelt, *compassionate service*, this quality of *accompaniment*, with the wider community of care givers in the Washington DC area.

This past August we made the long-considered decision to upgrade our round-the-clock medical care by hiring nurses for every shift. This change meant we had to say farewell to the home health aides and nursing assistants who had worked at Joseph's House for years. This goodbye was very painful.

We developed a plan to recruit and train volunteers to assist the nurses. We created two new full-time positions; we hired a cook and a housekeeper. I moved into the house to help maintain a sense of continuity for our residents who were in the midst of a change in their way of life at Joseph's House. Soon after, Angie Meyer, who had interned with us the year before, moved into the house with me to help nurture the spirit of welcome, support and loving kindness that can bring about deep spiritual and sometimes, even physical healing.

We developed an outreach and education program to teach hospice and other caregivers

## **The Triumph of Hope Over Fear**

*By David Hilfiker*

Bates College Stringfellow Lecture

March 31, 2004

We live in a time of extraordinary danger and extraordinary possibility. Our world is, in fact, at a crossroads, and ours must surely be one of the most exciting times in history. Decisions made in the course of our lifetimes will, for better or for worse, set the future course of humanity. We will choose between life and death.

It takes no great insight in 2004 to see that we live amidst extraordinary dangers. It's important, though, occasionally to reflect with each other about those dangers and our response to them. This can be a depressing business, so try to stay with me.

First on any list of dangers to our collective future must be environmental destruction. Indeed, if the scientists are to be believed, devastating damage to the ecology is a certainty within our lifetimes. Global warming, says a World Health Organization study published last year, already causes 160,000 deaths annually from malnutrition, childhood diarrhea, and malaria ... due to floods, droughts, and warmer temperatures, and we've barely begun to understand what will happen as temperatures really rise. Rates of cancer and genetic diseases have been rising over the last 150 years, certainly due in part to the hundreds of toxins detectable in the human body from air and water pollution. Just reciting the long list of environmental dangers—from the destruction of the rain forests to the hole in the ozone to the depletion of non-renewable resources—can be emotionally overwhelming.

A most important cause of this environmental risk is the affluence and consumerism of the West, and especially of the United States ... us. We're less than 5% of the world's people yet consume somewhere between 25 and 50 percent of the world's resources, depending on how you measure it. Despite clear evidence that our affluence is neither just nor sustainable, we persist. One has to ask, Why are we so blind to these threats to our own self-interest and that of our grandchildren? Surely, even automobile manufacturer CEOs have grandchildren!

It's even harder to understand why the people of the planet haven't eliminated nuclear weapons. The world's stockpile is still enough to destroy us all many times over. Russia and the United States, unbelievably, still have them pointed at each other ... and on a hair-trigger. After the end of the Cold War, the United States had an astonishing opportunity to lead all

## **A Tenuous Path of Hope**

*By Ryan Morgan*

When I first approached Patty Wudel, our executive director, about doing a feature story on Leon Basset I thought that my idea was one that was going to go over extremely well. I wanted to discuss Leon as a success, someone who got well enough to leave Joseph's House after having arrived a year earlier, near death with advanced AIDS. He walked out, I thought, and even in the modern age of sophisticated HIV/AIDS therapies his Lazarus story was one told too infrequently.

My idea, however, was received quite differently. "We are not about success stories," she told me, "that is not what we do here." She explained to me that Joseph's House is not about achievement, that proclaiming one person victorious when he leaves Joseph's House healthy bodied and able spirited is also to say that those who stay behind are failures. Her words resonated with me immediately, but more importantly, they helped illuminate to me how those of us who work with the men of Joseph's House are in a tenuous position if we are not conscious of the ways we might judge them when we view their lives. What we see at Joseph's House are merely snapshots of people's lives, periods of sickness and pain and laughter and life and death, all incapable of being summed up as representative of someone's whole existence. This truth became even clearer when I learned something about what Leon's life has been like after he got well enough to leave Joseph's House.

Leon and I agreed to meet at a popular restaurant, Ben's Chili Bowl on 14<sup>th</sup> Street.

I arrived early and purchased lunch. After about twenty minutes, Leon arrived carrying a bag of groceries and a large grin. He waved from across the room and began making his way over to me. Before he could remove his heavy winter coat and set his food down, workers from behind the counter began shouting at him to go outside. I couldn't understand why they were insistent that he go; my immediate assumption was that he was not allowed to bring outside food into the restaurant. After a few moments, I realized that the workers misguidedly thought they were protecting me from a vagrant, someone harassing me for spare change as I tried to enjoy my meal.

Strangely, the unfair, presumptuous encounter set an appropriate tone for Leon's story.

Life after Joseph's House has not been easy for Leon. Like many former residents of Joseph's House, he faced a bitter sweet reality when he got well enough to leave. Even though his health had improved and he was able to walk out of the house, his options for what to do next were up in the air. "I went through a lot of changes after I left Joseph's House," he said. "Experiencing life again was hard - it was the outside world. I was a former drug addict and drug dealer." Leon would characterize his life these last two years as full of uncertainty. "I've been holding on, praying. I've cried a little."

One of the most difficult barriers Leon faced when he left Joseph's House was finding somewhere to go. Fortunately, he was able to get a bed at Christ House, a supportive housing facility around the corner from Joseph's House for men who are typically less sick. Even though Leon had a roof over his head and a community to support him, he nonetheless was still coping with the associated problems of having a weakened immune system. Only a few months after leaving Joseph's House, he found himself sick once again, this time with pneumonia, and was hospitalized for two weeks, and then he moved into a nursing home for the next year.

I do not wish to extrapolate about what life was like during the time in the hospital and then later in the nursing home. Leon has a way about him that is very guarded and sparing of details. Perhaps it is difficult to put into words exactly what it is like to be a poor black man living with a life threatening illness. Perhaps the details are too painful to describe. These things I will never know. Leon did not wish to elaborate.

It is the details of Leon's outlook on life with which he is most forthcoming. Since establishing his relationship with Joseph's House, Leon has become critical of his old life. "I recognize so much more now that I didn't pay attention before," he says. "All I was about was that money. I realize none of it means anything." Leon now places meaning in his ability to get around and do for himself despite being hampered by the disease.

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## ***What to do in the darkness***

*By: Marilyn Chandler McEntyre*

Go slowly

Consent to it

But don't wallow in it

Know it as a place of germination

And growth

Remember the light

Take an outstretched hand if you find one

Exercise unused senses

Find the path by walking it

Practice trust

Watch for dawn

## **In Remeberance**

**Lamont Mack**

*April 3, 1971-February 22, 2004*

**Reginald Hansborough**

*September 21, 1964-March 6, 2004*

**Phillip Williams**

*August 12, 1973-April 5, 2004*

**Hassan Joyner**

*August 16, 1971-April 15, 2004*

**Tony Martin**

*March 3, 1964-May 12, 2004*

**Tommie Woodson**

*February 8, 1950-May 14, 2004*

**Robert Terry**

*July 27, 1968-July 1, 2004*

**Rogelio Hernandez**

*August 16, 1958-August 12, 2004*

**Samuel Hunter**

*November 18, 1939-August 10, 2004*

**Anthony McCallop**

*August 30, 1964-September 13, 2004*

**Laurence Groomes**

*November 28, 1927-September 22, 2004*

**Andre Wood**

*April 16, 1948-September 26, 2004*

**John Stevens**

*July 17, 1950-October 18, 2004*

**Sam Jenkins**

*September 21, 1969-October 20, 2004*

**Anthony MacKall**

*July 15, 1959-January 12, 2005*

**Raymond McCrane**

*November 19, 1948-January 19, 2005*

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six billion of us to a nuclear-free world. Russia was eager to go and surely other nations could have been pressured to follow. But permanent and complete nuclear disarmament has never been a serious goal of American policy, and the Bush Administration's Nuclear Posture Review of 2002 reaffirms a commitment to nuclear superiority indefinitely. We're even planning new types of nuclear weapons. Despite the overwhelming dangers of nuclear proliferation—including acquisition by terrorist groups—we've refused to eliminate these threats to the human future. Again, why are we so blind to our own self-interest? Surely we never intend to use those things!

For the past twenty years, I've worked amidst the poverty of inner-city Washington. What's

*When capitalism becomes the religion, the "common good" no longer has a meaning; we all become atomized, competitive individuals; and fear of scarcity becomes the reigning motive.*

become abundantly clear is that our nation has abandoned the poor. In my Christian understanding, a nation is judged by how well it cares for the poor, and we're failing that test. An African-American man growing up in Harlem has a life expectancy lower than a man from Bangladesh. The infant mortality rate for children living in poverty is almost 2½ times the average. Millions of people are left behind in Appalachian hollers, Native American reservations, or inner-city ghettos and their

children are consigned to utterly unnecessary deprivation. I use the word "unnecessary" deliberately because the level of destitution in our country is a choice—a political choice our society could make differently.

The rich nations have also refused to deal with the extraordinary levels of poverty worldwide. For lack of easily available food and sanitation, approximately 30,000 children around the world die every day. That's the population of a city the size of Washington every three weeks ... a holocaust, and we do nothing.

We don't even seem to understand that such levels of destitution in the rest of the world inevitably impact us, the affluent. At the simplest level, research shows clearly that people living in a more

unequal society are sicker and die sooner than those living in a more equal society—even the rich die from inequality. Worse, the terrorism we're beginning to see around the world is only the beginning. The globe is shrinking. Poor people everywhere see our affluence (on television if nowhere else), and they understand that the economic and political structures that bring us this extraordinary wealth are the same ones that leave them mired in penury. Increasingly, they're no longer putting up with it, and the risk of violence is high. Yet we choose not to invest in the well being of the world's destitute. Why?

Let me also mention two recent developments. Eighteen months ago the Bush Administration declared our right to invade any country, anywhere, anytime, in "preventive war"—if we, in our judgment alone, fear it might at some future time become a danger to us ... a policy actualized in our invasion of Iraq. The implications of this stunning breach of 400 years of international law on world stability alone are terrifying.

Second is the growing loss of American civil rights and due process since 9/11. On the US military base in Guantánamo, Cuba, over six hundred men arrested around the world have been held for over two years without charges or access to lawyers. Not wanting to give the captives their internationally recognized rights as prisoners of war, our government has refused to name them such. But we've also not charged them as criminals or given them basic legal rights due even foreign. They have no status. And then the government makes the unprecedented claim that because they're being held in Cuba US courts have no jurisdiction. The president alone is prosecutor, judge and jury.

In addition to those on Guantánamo, thousands of Middle-Eastern men have been incarcerated for months at a time, again without charges or access to lawyers. Often these men have been deported for insignificant immigration violations—sometimes after living here for decades as permanent residents married to American citizens. And two American citizens have even been held for months without charges or access to lawyers. The government is claiming that when it names anyone an "enemy combatant," the courts have no jurisdiction.

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These cases may sound distant and irrelevant, but when governments begin to destroy our civil rights, they do so first at the periphery. Only gradually do people wake up to what's been done. There's that famous quote from the German Pastor Martin Niemöller:

*When Hitler attacked the Jews I wasn't a Jew, so I wasn't concerned. And when Hitler attacked the Catholics, I wasn't a Catholic, so I wasn't concerned. And when Hitler attacked the unions and the industrialists, I wasn't a member of the unions, so I wasn't concerned. Then Hitler attacked me and the Protestant church—and there was nobody left to be concerned.*

I'll repeat my earlier question. Why have we Americans been so blind?

There are, of course, many causes of our blindness, but let me name four.

The first is the triumph of capitalism not only as the sole remaining economic system but also as the way we think about ourselves, our purpose, our relationships, and our future. It is the dominant religion. We've accepted as articles of faith

- that the individual is the most important social grouping,
- that society works best if we look out only for our own immediate interest, and
- that profit is the primary human motivator.

Money has become the measure of worth, and we've assented to private wealth as the measuring stick that determines who gets what. When capitalism becomes the religion, the "common good" no longer has a meaning; we all become atomized, competitive individuals; and fear of scarcity becomes the reigning motive.

The second reason is related: an extraordinary addiction to affluence and consumerism. I use the term "addiction" advisedly. Consider a few of the markers of addiction:

- tolerance: the addict needs more and more to get the same kick. Whatever our level of affluence and consumption, we're invariably dissatisfied and want more.

- the refusal to recognize the addiction, indeed, to get angry at those who point it out. Try having a conversation with someone about their level of affluence and see how far you get in suggesting that perhaps it's just a tad out of control.

- the utter inability of the addict to face up to the negative consequences of the addiction. So we don't even see the impending disaster ... much less respond to it.

A third reason for our blindness is the incredible sophistication of advertising, both commercial and political. Over the last hundred years advertisers have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into research to make advertising an incredibly sophisticated psychological weapon. Few of us believe we're much affected, of course. The purpose of advertising is to inflame desire and get us to buy what we don't really need, while studiously avoiding the collateral damage. It's devilishly successful. And when sophisticated advertising moves into politics, people can routinely be induced to vote against their self-interest.

Tying all these reasons—and more—together, however, is fear. Fear makes us blind. We're afraid of losing our standard of living, afraid of crime, afraid of people who are different from us, afraid of terrorism. People wear handguns despite clear evidence it puts them and their families at greater risk. We're convinced that crime is getting worse when it's been getting steadily less frequent. The chance of any one of us dying in a terrorist attack is infinitesimal, yet our fear has been harnessed to rob of us basic freedoms, invade other nations, spend almost as much on our military as all the other nations in the world combined, and so on. What else besides fear would keep us from destroying our nuclear weapons?

As I've tried to look objectively at our failure to curb the destruction of the environment, at the still-standing nuclear weapons, at our abandonment of the poor, and at all the rest, it's been hard to come to any conclusion other than that we're

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He takes pride in “being responsible for me,” he says.

Leon attributes his attitude of being responsible for himself as helping him transform his life and find value where before he didn't find any. He relies on a strong but not dogmatic faith for support. “I am not a religious person,” he contends. “I just have spirituality in my life. I don't understand faith. I don't know its meaning.” But beneath this ambiguity about what is guiding Leon is an incredible trust in where he is going and in his own ability to follow where he thinks God is leading him. “The only thing that helps me in this world is God and my willpower. God is larger than all of us.”

Perhaps most instrumental to people getting well at Joseph's House are the relationships that form and sustain them. And it is those relationships that keep Leon coming back to the house so long after he departed. From the men and the staff at the house Leon says he still receives “the full effect, all kinds of support” and returns the favor in kind. “I'm just trying to give back,” he says. “I just do things from the heart. That's the way the Joseph's House taught me.”

When the subject turned to Patty, Leon's eyes lit up at the thought of his friend and all that she means to him. “I am thankful to her for being alive. I was a wreck when I came here.” Remembering his demeanor when he lived in the house, Leon acknowledges that it was difficult for a relationship between him and Patty to take shape. “When I was on drugs I didn't have any love; all I had was anger. I was a nasty guy, a walking time bomb,” he said. But it was Leon's anger that Patty was able to get past to help him see what he has to offer the world and what reason he had to strive to recover his health. “Patty is my guardian angel. She put up with me and made me realize that the world isn't over, that I have something to live for.”

It is so tempting to view Leon's transformation with a kind of Pollyanna optimism and a too-easy hope. But to do that would shortchange him, ignoring the magnitude of his daily battle to stay clean and sober and to believe that he really can

make something positive of his life. To do so would be not to acknowledge the difficulties of a man who faces incredible uncertainty on a daily basis.

Recently Leon moved out of a friend's house where he was staying on the couch. Now he has a room of his own in a boarding house. Like so much of his life these past few years, this is a blessing mixed with more insecurity as he does not know how he is going to make the \$550 monthly rent with a meager \$500 disability income. Dilemmas of this sort have become a routine that Leon must face blindly with deferential courage. “I don't know my life anymore,” he said. “I don't know. I can't judge it, that's up to the Lord. I take my life one step at a time.”

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struggling against something far more powerful than the human faces we see.

If you poll people around the country, most of us say that given a choice we'd choose a very different course. We want a society that takes better care of the environment and the poor; we want to eliminate nuclear weapons and avoid military force. But if this is a democracy and most of us want these things, why don't we have them? What's going on?

William Stringfellow can help us here, for he explored in some depth the notion of the "powers and principalities." The phrase comes from the book of Ephesians in the New Testament, where Paul says:

*It's not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the Powers and Principalities who originate the darkness in this world, the spiritual army of evil in the heavens. (Eph 6:12)*

Now, I don't usually talk about "the spiritual army of evil in the heavens" or even the "powers who originate the darkness in this world," but biblical scholar Walter Wink, an interpreter of Stringfellow, has helped me understand the meaning and importance of what Paul is talking about. Like the soul of a person, explains Wink, institutions also have their internal aspect, what you might call their "spirit." It's nothing magical or ghostlike: just the reality that an institution—a school, a family, a country, a corporation, capitalism itself—has a powerful spirit capable of thwarting the will of even those nominally in charge. And so a corporation, for instance, can so thoroughly embody the values of savage capitalism that it's incapable of limiting pollution or paying a living wage even when managers may want to.

Consider the spirit of our nation and its commitment to violence. Beginning with the systematic extermination of Native Americans, then slavery and continuing with the Mexican War, the Spanish-American War, the Vietnam War and countless little invasions along the way, we now commit ourselves to nuclear superiority, pre-emptive war and eternal military dominance. We who see the dangers coming are struggling not only to change

the minds of our leaders but also for the soul of our nation.

Similarly, there are spirits of our economic system, of our schools and universities, of families, or of any other institution.

Well, I told you this was going to be depressing, but thanks for staying with me this long. How are we to understand all this? What are we to do about it? How do we maintain our spirit?

*The purpose of advertising is to inflame desire and get us to buy what we don't really need, while studiously avoiding the collateral damage.*

While many of the principalities and powers are now fallen and do evil, God created them good, and they can be redeemed. But we must know what we're really struggling against and approach them not only physically and intellectually but also through the spirit ... spiritually. We continue our physical and intellectual work—say in a demonstration against the Iraq war—but we also recognize that the spirit of the country, the spirit of war needs to be approached, too. For those of you who understand prayer, prayer is part of what I'm talking about. We must also approach these powers and principalities recognizing the danger to our own spirits and taking appropriate measures to protect ourselves. We must see that the goal is to change not just the behavior of, say, the US in relationship to Iraq, but also the entire militaristic spirit of the country, to bring about an active nonviolence.

If we look at what's recently happened or is happening in the rest of the world through this lens, we find extraordinary possibility, for there's new spirit, an increasing willingness to join together in common solutions. On a practical, physical level, the Kyoto Accords, the International Criminal Court, and countless other treaties reveal a will to reduce environmental damage and militarism. Last year's international demonstrations against the invasion of Iraq, the successful protests against the World Trade Organization, and the meeting of the World Social Forum reveal a new spirit.

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Writer Jonathan Schell has suggested that over the last century wars of conquest have become increasingly futile. No foreign colonial power, he points out, has succeeded in maintaining control of indigenous people. More importantly, there's been a tidal wave of nonviolent revolutions overthrowing domination governments. Gandhi's India is the best-known example, but there are also the rise of democracy in Portugal and Spain, the elimination of Apartheid in South Africa, the fall of the Soviet Union and one after another the rise of democratic governments in the Baltic countries, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and elsewhere. The people intimately involved with those revolutions—Gandhi, Bishop Tutu, Vaclav Havel—write that the spiritual battle was primary; only then were the physical changes possible.

Schell also points to the potential—brought about, paradoxically, by the existence of nuclear weapons—to make war between major nations obsolete. The 20th century saw nuclear deterrence—despite its extraordinary risk—prevent war between nuclear nations. So unthinkable is the use of these weapons, in fact, that France, the United States, and the Soviet Union each chose to lose a war (in Algeria, Vietnam, and Afghanistan respectively) rather than use them. In a fascinating twist, Schell points out that the actual hardware isn't necessary to nuclear deterrence. The reality is that any of at least twenty different nations have the scientific and technological capacity to make nuclear weapons, and the knowledge behind that capacity can't be put back in the bottle. If, therefore—through international treaties and rigorous, invasive inspections—we were once to eliminate nuclear weapons hardware, just the capacity for any nation to build them again would exert the same deterrent effect the hardware now creates. We could have the benefit of deterrence without significant risk.

Furthermore, there are powerful pockets of resistance to the dominant order within Third World movements. I spent a week with four South African trade unionists a year or two ago, and they spoke with extraordinary excitement about the possibility within their country for democracy and economic freedom. Yes, they recognized the dangers that exist and the hard work necessary, but they also sense possibility for the future.

You may have noticed that I haven't yet spoken of the hope that's in the title of this talk. I've hesitated because within the capitalist worldview hope is merely about future acquisition, about buying and selling. The word has been emptied of any meaning except a saccharine optimism, and I'd suggest that it's hard to be optimistic about our national collective future. Hope usually rests on a transcendent purpose, but the triumph of capitalism has also made it hard to imagine transcendent purpose. How does one risk one's life so that the family might have two cars?

So how do we live if hope has been emptied of meaning? I'm a physician and chose to work among the poor because it was one way to resist the Dominant Consciousness that had abandoned the poor. I'm a parent, and I've tried to immerse my children in a resistance to the consumerism and militarism of our society. I'm now a writer and speaker using my time and skills to analyze and to educate. Sixteen months ago when the invasion of Iraq was imminent I spent three weeks in Baghdad and elsewhere in the country; this past January, when because of the instability it was far more dangerous, I spent two weeks there. Although the risk wasn't as great as the risk our soldiers' on duty face there, I voluntarily put my life at some risk because of a vision of peace and justice that motivates me. You might argue about the appropriateness or efficacy of what I did, but the transcendent purpose—a purpose beyond myself—gives me a place, a belonging ... and I have a faith that somehow God will use my life to bring in a future of reconciliation.

I haven't asked them, but I suspect that if you talk at any length to Gregory Rosenthal or any of the JED Collective [people being honored for their activity in the community], you'll discover an inner knowledge that they, too, have a place, that their lives makes sense, that they're called to act in the service of love. One's tempted to ask, Where do they find the hope to persist? But I suspect it's the other way round—that they first dedicate their lives to the struggle and then find what feels like hope. In the face of extraordinary risk, we lose hope when we turn away, when we ignore the danger, when we become cynical; OR we put ourselves where we belong and find deep meaning and purpose. That experience often happens in wartime when people risk everything, even their lives, to save family and community.

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The crisis that confronts us is as great as any we might imagine, for it's quite literally about our survival as a human society. And I'm convinced that dedicating our lives to resistance—much as soldiers dedicate themselves utterly—brings meaning and, yes, even hope. No matter what the specifics of the profession or role we're called to, we can find a place for it within pockets of resistance. If we understand the importance of our task—as did pockets of French resistance against Nazism, South Africans against Apartheid, Indians against British occupation—we're given new life. The antidote to hopelessness is active commitment to a different world.

We live in a time of extraordinary danger and extraordinary possibility. Our world is, in fact, at a crossroads, and ours must surely be one of the most exciting times in history. The people that we honor this evening have become part of that history. We're all invited to join them.

## Save the Date

# Joseph's House 15th Anniversary Celebration

**Time: 7 pm**

**Date: Friday, June 3, 2005**

**Place: To be Announced**

**Further information will be sent in April 2005**

## A Franciscan Benediction

May God bless you with discomfort

At easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships  
So that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger

At injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people,  
So that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears

To shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war,  
So that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and  
To turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness

To believe that you can make a difference in the world,  
So that you can do what others claim can not be done  
To bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

Amen

## Save the Date

### Healers Art: A Special Training for End-of-life Caregivers

June 4 and 5, 2005  
9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Public Welfare Foundation  
1200 U Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009

*Weaving together moving stories, meditation practices, and good common sense developed over 20 years at the bedside, Frank Ostaseski helps us to see that accompanying those at the end-of-life is much more than providing appropriate medical care. It is a spiritual practice: the healer's art.*

*This workshop is open to all and may be of particular interest to professionals or those who anticipate caring for family members or friends facing life-threatening illness.*

Further information will be sent in April, 2005.

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and volunteers the spiritual elements of *compassionate service*, in order to share our experience that under very challenging circumstances, the practice of loving without conditions and forgiving over and over again, is not just an ideal, it is possible—and that in this practice of love and forgiveness—*everyone* is served, *all* are changed. Convinced that Joseph's House has something of unique value to share with our wider community, we have developed a plan to do it.

And we entered a process to help us discern whether we are being called to open a second house, a home where those men who experience physical as well as spiritual and emotional healing after some time at Joseph's House—can move if they become too well to stay any longer. As we did in the beginning, we long to be able to say to every man who comes into the Joseph's House community, "You have a home here for as long as you live."

The changes have asked a lot from all of us and I have never been so exhausted. But in my experience Joseph's House has never been a kinder, more beautiful place and I have deep confidence in the changes we are making.

For a long time I have held the image of Joseph's House as a set of beautiful bowls that fit into each other. One bowl is our way of life of turning toward suffering, practicing love without conditions, becoming willing to forgive over and over again. This is compassionate service, true community. Another bowl is our capacity to awaken to the economic, social and political realities that contribute to suffering and poverty: and to meet them and become willing to change them. This is also true community. Both bowls are held in the love of God.

At Joseph's House we feel called away from "charity work." We feel called to become a transforming institution, a place where economic, social and political realities are met and changed. We feel invited by God to become an alternate structure of love and justice that speaks not only to the pain of the few individuals we meet but

also to the suffering of the wider soul of the community and society. This is the simple, courageous way of the Gospels. We become willing to understand that which we fear (who does not fear suffering?) - and allow the possibility of opening our hearts to it. When this happens even a little, change will come, not only for our residents but also for us and through us, for our culture. As we let go of our own fears and powerlessness, those little chinks in the armor of the society become more visible, and we see how greater change can occur.

You have blessed, supported and accompanied Joseph's House for a long time. Together, one day at a time, we are softening fear and increasing love. Together, held in Love, we have strength for today and hope for tomorrow. Who could ask for anything more?