

The Jerusalem ★ Star

Winter 2013:

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Jesus' words from the gospel of Matthew are the first that come to mind when I think of charity and justice, a topic which has been on the hearts of our community here at Jerusalem Farm since our community formed in April.

Charity is, most generally and ideally, a gift (of time, money, etc) to someone without expecting anything in return. It's taking care of Jesus in the form of our homeless, forgotten, or broken brothers and sisters in this world. It goes against the basic tenants of economics where producers seek to maximize profits and humans are reduced to simple consumers who act in the world only for themselves. Instead, charity draws from a religious or humanistic belief in human dignity, in the rights of humans, and the idea that no one deserves to suffer the absence of food, water, shelter, etc. In my mind charity is motivated by genuine concern, love of humanity, and a desire to alleviate the situation; our actions demonstrate our love of Christ made flesh.

Unfortunately, charitable



Andrea and Lavena catch up

acts are dwarfed by the reigning socio-political / economic systems and often aren't capable of true,

"LORD, WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY AND FEED YOU, OR THIRSTY AND GIVE YOU DRINK? WHEN DID WE SEE YOU A STRANGER AND MAKE YOU WELCOME, LACKING CLOTHES AND CLOTHE YOU? WHEN DID WE FIND YOU SICK OR IN PRISON AND GO TO SEE YOU?" AND THE KING WILL ANSWER, "IN TRUTH I TELL YOU, IN SO FAR AS YOU DID THIS TO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE BROTHERS OF MINE, YOU DID IT TO ME." – MATTHEW 25:37-40

lasting change. Or, to put it another way, they have a tendency to leave the root causes of our society's failure to care for all of its members– the exploitation of workers, low

wages, the reckless pursuit of profit, and disrespect for God's creation to name a few – untouched and often thriving. We give money to a charity that helps with victims of an oil spill, yet business goes on as corrupt and war-mongering as usual after an X billion dollar wrist slap and a few meaningless indictments. We give money to help the homeless, yet millions stay homeless due to lack of employment, education, a good family, and a whole host of other reasons that pile up and demand more than monthly donations. Whether we like it or not, we've been trained to think that we're too small to change our

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Stories of transformation, hope and joy because you support Prayer, Community, Simplicity and Service in Kansas City

A few weeks ago several of us here at Jerusalem Farm attended a volunteer training session at Jewish Vocational Services – the organization that oversees refugee resettlement in Kansas City. The training was part of mandatory procedure to be able to volunteer with JVS as a refugee mentor. JVS pairs a newly resettled family or individual with a volunteer who wants to come alongside and support them during their transition into a new place, culture and lifestyle. We wanted to be part of this program because our neighborhood, Pendleton Heights, is one of the primary neighborhoods for refugee resettlement in the metro area. It presented the perfect opportunity to get to know more of our neighbors!

Self-Sufficiency is the catchphrase in literature from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). From the day a refugee arrives in the country there is a propulsion and expectation that he/she achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible. In addition to learning everything from language to cultural expectations to using public transit, a refugee experiences the pressure of finding a job and paying taxes. But many resettlement agencies like JVS understand that there is much more that an individual needs to be integrated into North American society than just finding a job. That's why they organize relationship-based programs like their Mentor Program.

Our good friend and former neighbor was a refugee from Africa who lived in Kansas City for more than 10 years. He spent those years in a perpetual state of dissonance, struggling to bridge the gap between his own values and the financial rigors of attaining self-sufficiency. Finding that the work of minimum wage jobs

"to be in control of one's destiny, job, or finances is an unquestionable moral value today. It even sounds mature and spiritual."

–Richard Rohr

stripped him of his dignity he eventually decided to subsist on giving haircuts in his apartment and fixing peoples' cars and computers. A couple of months ago the management of the apartment he lived in evicted him. Their grounds for eviction were not concrete and several reasons were given, one of them being the foot traffic that his entrepreneurial undertakings brought to the building. "Trying to make a man fit into a system he doesn't belong," is what he would say his life felt like and even a decade in the U.S was not long enough for him to carve a sustaining niche in the system. He decided to pack his bags and move back to Africa.

In one of his books Richard Rohr comments that "to be in control of one's destiny, job, or finances is an unquestionable moral value today. It even sounds mature and spiritual." We live in a society that capitalizes on driving people towards achieving the best for themselves giving very little thought about those around them. How can such egotism be compatible with the home cultures of many refugees, like our friend, that are more familial- and less individual-focused? How can we ease the burden of such a severe cultural paradigm shift for refugees or any newcomer for that matter?

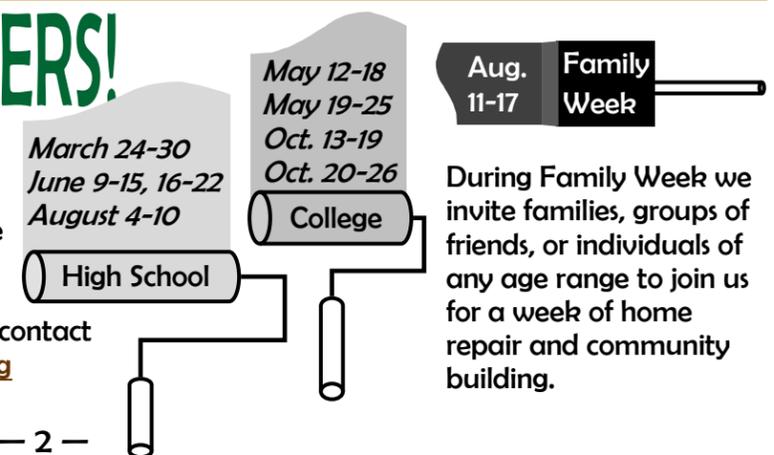
Living out the gospel calls us to move away from self-sufficiency toward interdependency as was done in the early church (Acts 2:42-47). Imagine what it would look like to live out this call in our neighborhoods. I think the first step is to accept that there is much we have much to learn from the experiences and culture of our neighbors, no matter where they are from and how long they've lived in this country. Then growth can only take place through relationship – engaging with the world around us and with one another.

Maybe we'll find that we're all on the same journey of integration.
★ Abhi Dutt

Self-sufficiency?

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

Jerusalem Farm needs you in order to keep living out the cornerstones of Prayer, Community, Simplicity, and Service in Kansas City. If you or anyone you know of is interested in putting together a group of volunteers to come join us for an urban-immersion service retreat for one of the weeks listed here, please contact Kristina at 816.421.1855 or volunteer@jerusalemfarm.org



During Family Week we invite families, groups of friends, or individuals of any age range to join us for a week of home repair and community building.

Guess what? Lent is here. We celebrated Ash Wednesday by being blessed with ashes on our forehead, and we were reminded that our time here on earth is limited. We were told to “remember that you are dust and to dust you will return.” A

ONE OF THE RULERS PUT THIS QUESTION TO HIM, 'GOOD MASTER, WHAT SHALL I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?' JESUS SAID TO HIM... ' YOU KNOW THE COMMANDMENTS: YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT KILL; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT GIVE FALSE WITNESS; HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.' HE REPLIED, 'I HAVE KEPT ALL THESE SINCE MY EARLIEST DAYS.' AND WHEN JESUS HEARD THIS HE SAID, 'THERE IS STILL ONE THING YOU LACK. SELL EVERYTHING YOU OWN AND DISTRIBUTE THE MONEY TO THE POOR, AND YOU WILL HAVE TREASURE IN HEAVEN; THEN COME, FOLLOW ME.' BUT WHEN HE HEARD THIS HE WAS OVERCOME WITH SADNESS, FOR HE WAS VERY RICH. – LUKE 18:18,20-23

sobering thought and not one that we as individuals or our society tends/wants to dwell on all

mention watching our friends, siblings, kids and grandchildren

What Shall I Do?

that much. Whether it be the latest vitamin, newest surgical procedure, best advised diet or the right amount of exercise, you can see throughout human history that we are constantly seeking a way to live longer and find that fountain of youth. Life is good and blessed. There are always new things to do, places to see and people to meet, not to

grow up. We want to enjoy these things forever. With Ash Wednesday we are

told that this will all end someday, but we shall not be left in despair. With ashes on our forehead our eyes are cast upon a forty day journey to the discovery of a promise, a sacrifice and our ultimate Hope.

Just like the ruler in Luke (above), we too ask the question to Jesus during Lent: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” The

interesting thing is that instead of Jesus responding with only a list of commandments that should be followed; he asks the ruler to commit a great act of charity and then to enter into relationship and follow Him on a journey. It was not enough for Jesus that this man followed a set of rules or moral principles. “Thou shall not kill, thou shall not steal...”, it wasn't even enough for this man to do a great act of charity (giving all he has to the poor), this ruler was being asked to walk with Christ. During Lent we too are asked to go on this same journey with Christ. For myself

and I am sure for many others, when I hear “Lent” I instantly think “What am I going to give up?” But this Lent I challenge you to dig deeper (if you haven't already). When we look at what it means to follow Christ, we see what He did in His life. He challenged the rulers and asked the question: “why?” Why don't Jews stop for Samaritans who are injured on the side of the road? Why are women being treated as objects and being stoned for sins while corrupt wealthy men run the synagogues?

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Avila University and Donnelly College students came together for a day of service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. this January. Thanks for your

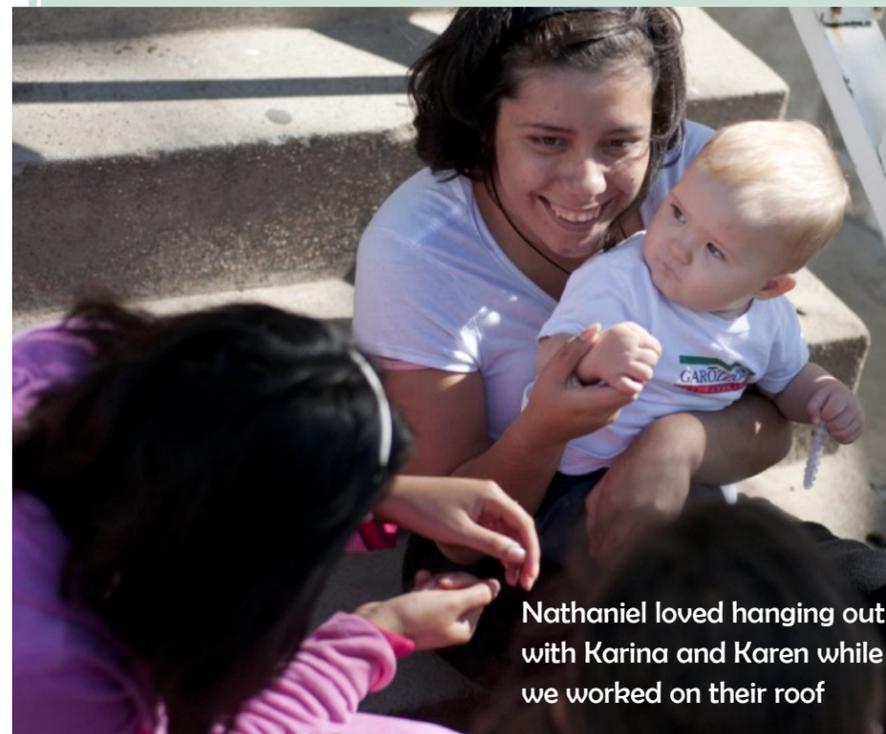


Continued from page 3) Why do I not treat my neighbors as family? Why should I build up hatred within myself towards my enemies thus causing further fear and violence instead of working towards peace and reconciliation?

Surely these questions still persist today! We are called beyond charity and even radical charity. We are called into an active relationship with Christ in which we work to transform ourselves and our desires so that we may better transform

our world into a more just and loving world. I can understand why the young ruler walked away sad. He had much to lose. He had either built for himself or been given many material blessings and perhaps was proud of his power and prestige. He may have seen that the message of Jesus was going to lead towards that walk to Golgotha. He may have known that the many followers of Christ would soon be martyr's themselves because their message was so radical, but only if he would have known about that Easter Sunday. We are Easter people. We know of the Good News. Let us pray this Lent that we may find some way to transform our lives and those around us through purposeful prayer, fasting, giving and loving. In our quest for everlasting life let us work in the present towards “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

★ Jordan Schiele



Nathaniel loved hanging out with Karina and Karen while we worked on their roof

Curbside Composting!

Beginning this March Jerusalem Farm will help our neighborhood, Pendleton Heights, be one of the greenest neighborhoods in the KC area! Thanks to a grant from the Mid-America Regional Council Solid Waste Management District, we will be providing weekly curbside compost collection to neighbors in Pendleton Heights. The project will help to divert food scraps from the landfill, as 16% of Kansas City area



turned into nutrient rich soil to add to gardens in our community!

We see this as a great opportunity to further our mission of transforming lives through sustainable living, as we introduce our neighbors and volunteers to the benefits of composting! It will also be a

wonderful way to build relationships with more of our neighbors through conversations and education about the composting project. During the warm months, the Jerusalem Farm community and volunteers will be collecting food scraps and

occasional yard waste using bicycles and trailers, promoting alternative, sustainable transportation! Updates to come... Andrea Dutt



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES Collected food and yard scraps will be

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Looking ahead to a plentiful harvest, Jordan and Andrea poured over seed catalogs this January and placed an order of seeds for our garden! Seedlings will begin sprouting at Jerusalem Farm by late February! While there are many great seed companies, this year we chose to buy our seeds from *Seeds of Change* and *Seed Savers Exchange*. We chose these two companies because they focus on heirloom and organic varieties. Heirloom seeds are important to us because growing them helps to preserve diversity through continuing

varieties of plants that may have been growing for centuries! Organic seeds are important to us because they are not genetically modified and we're making a vote towards supporting the growth of food without toxic chemicals. Consider buying some heirloom or organic seeds for your garden this summer (or if you don't garden, buying some for a friend who does garden).

★ Andrea Dutt



Share with us at [facebook.com/JerusalemFarm](https://www.facebook.com/JerusalemFarm) your favorite seed varieties and what you'll be growing this year

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communities. We believe we can only give to charities or vote with our dollars in order to make a small dent in a system that we disagree with. Another world is possible, however, and it's my belief that charity needs a combined social, political, economic, and religious vision behind it, one that is committed to change so that charity is irrelevant and unnecessary. And that's where justice comes in.

Charity & Justice

Our work at Jerusalem Farm is largely charity, which is something that all of us living here realize. We work on the homes of low income families or individuals in the area, providing free labor and also offering a no-interest loan that allows them to pay us back at a comfortable rate. In our discussion about charity and justice, it was brought up that our work here could also be considered justice work.

Micah 6:8

Wikipedia says,

And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God

among other things, that justice is "a concept of moral rightness based on ethics, rationality, law, natural law, religion or equity." That obviously takes on a lot of different forms depending on what society you're living in, but justice in a Catholic sense is pretty well laid out with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Justice is treating

people the way Jesus did – with human dignity, with a preference for those in need, and with expectations but also compassion. It's in many ways the opposite of justice that we see on television, where criminals are tackled to the ground and put in prison or executed. It's a justice of mercy, forgiveness, and the ultimate love that was shown to us by Jesus. Providing necessary home repairs, then, steps partially

outside the realm of charity, and – through the relationships that form and the repairs that are done – provides spaces for growth and community on both sides. Justice for our community is doing our best at bringing the rights that all people deserve to them with an open heart and a smile (and being completed ourselves in the process).

It is all of our task as Christians to make religion not merely focused on our promised afterlife, but on the sacred gift of life right in front of us. Our justice transcends the justice of the state or of the economy and does not accept starvation and exploitation – it is revolutionary in its charity and mercy, it demands the kingdom of God "on Earth as it is in heaven," and it's the kind of world that I want to live in.

★ Zack DiVozzo



Jerusalem Farm

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Prayer - Community - Service - Simplicity

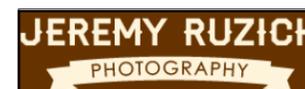
Jerusalem Farm is a Catholic Intentional community located in Kansas City, Missouri, built on the four cornerstones of Prayer, Community, Service and Simplicity. We strive to transform our lives and those around us through service retreat experiences, sustainable living and home repair.

Thank You to:

Our Fiscal Sponsor:



Our Photographer:



Go to www.photojeremy.com to see pictures of all three farms

You've read our thoughts on charity and justice, but what do YOU think? We would love to hear your thoughts on the relationship between the two. Post on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/JerusalemFarm



Our Community:

Jessie, Jordan, & Nathaniel Schiele
Andrea & Abhi Dutt
Kristina & Zack DiVozzo
Alice Foreman

All of YOU who donated to our "Keep the Heat On" campaign:

Because of your generosity we were able to install two new energy efficient furnaces and air conditioners. Big thanks also to **Christmas in October** for donating the furnaces and **Albert & Sons** for providing low-cost installation.

Our Board of Directors:
Dave Armstrong - Chair
Sr. Rose McLarney - Secretary
Bill Cordaro,
James Cianciaruso,
Jude Huntz
Kenneth Mayo,
Regina Staves,
John Summers
Fr. Bob Stone,
Angela Torres



Our Wish List

- ✓ Ridgid 12" Miter Saw - \$300
- ✓ Ridgid 18v Cordless Drills - \$100
- ✓ Pressure Canner - \$85
- ✓ 12-16oz. Hammers - \$20
- ✓ Gas Cards (BP preferred)
- ✓ Monetary donations - Any Size!

For a complete list go to www.jerusalemfarm.org