



Norman's Whereabouts

by Norman Searah

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It's September, and I'm going home to England for two weeks. I've been quite busy, and I'm thankful for the cane made for me by John Mahoney, Catholic Worker from Spotsylvania, VA.

A movie I saw a while back (that I also loaned to Frank) entitled "The United State vs John Lennon" took me back to when Nixon was president. There was a lot going on then to the end the war in Vietnam—from antiwar songs by Pete Seeger and others to Abbie Hoffman to demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Returning veterans' threw their medals over the fence on the White House grounds, and even Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King spoke out against that war.

Now, we need to end this war. We need to begin talking (and listening) to one another. U.S. leaders should not be the only decision-makers. We need to share more with other countries than music and sports. One planet is a lot like having one body, if we don't take care of the one we have; we don't get another.

I hate war, and I hate profiting from war. I hate any idea that would

put weapons in space. If the Earth and Heavens are sacred—as I believe they are—it must be evil to turn them into places of war. We are only guests here, and we have no right to wreck the place during our visit. Whether we are rich or middle-class or poor or regardless of our race; we can show we care in our manners, and respect toward each other and our planet.

I wrote Pope Benedict and told him that Pope Paul once gathered leaders from all the religions of the world in one place to pray for peace. He replied thanking me for my letter, and then I later read that he is indeed now scheduled to speak at the United Nations in New York City next spring. I would like very much to be there, of course. My fingers are crossed that he will speak for the world to know peace. We've known about war long enough. I'll keep you posted if my wish is realized.

I know that the war machines contribute to global warming. I wonder how much of this past summer's violent weather is because of this. In Iowa we've had intense heat and intense storms with nothing in between. I heard stories of flash floods, failed sewer systems, and flooded basements every day. The number of forest fires and tornadoes (including unlikely places like Brooklyn, NY, and England) and worse hurricanes like Hurricane Dean are

also bad. Scariest, I think, is news of how quickly the North and South poles are now melting.

Ted Walker visited us after he had been writing in Austria. He said there wasn't much snow in the Alps this year, and the reef is still having trouble.

It's not just our country, but the world that needs our help. We shouldn't just rely on government to act; we need people helping people.

I remember the Indian in the t.v. ad with the tear in his eye for the trashing the Earth. Maybe instead of driving alone to work or school or to shop; we can start carpools. Maybe you could start a bicycle club at school or work (that could lead to some part-time work fixing bikes). Help your neighbor (even if he doesn't speak English), even if it's just cutting his lawn. (You might just make a friend.) We can learn to be stewards of the land by helping each other, picking up a little trash and teaching others to do the same.

I saw a young person on television who had cleaned up part of the Mississippi River, and he reminded me of two others named Adam and Even who turned vacant lots in New York City into gardens.

I know that towns aren't like cities, but even in towns you can turn high schools into community learning centers. Towns without doctors can ask someone who knows first-aid

teach it to others. Someone who knows how to grow food could teach others how. Turn a car lot into a classroom and teach each other how to repair a car. The willingness to share is there. We never know how much we can teach and help each other unless we try.

Before I close, I want to also know what's happening in your world. I want to know more about your ideas about the world from global warming to being a Catholic Worker, so I can write about it.

In the next issue, I've asked my friend Victor, a neighbor and friend of the Catholic Worker is going to write this column. It's my way of letting people speak.

