

Desert Voices

The Newsletter of Nevada Desert Experience

Vol. 11 No. 1

Winter 1998

150 ARRESTED AT THE NEVADA NUCLEAR WEAPONS TEST SITE:

300 Celebrate Dorothy Day's Legacy

by Robert Holmes

It isn't the usual subdued crowd in the airport waiting room. This flight is to Las Vegas and people are excited. So am I, but for different reasons. I am going to the 100th birthday party for Dorothy Day! Nevada Desert Experience and the Las Vegas Catholic Worker have called Catholic Workers together to honor Dorothy's legacy of love and nonviolence in places dedicated to lust for money and lust for power. I will record my journey as I go.

Clarification of thought is the name of the game as we begin round table discussions on a myriad of favorite Catholic Worker topics. The first is on voluntary poverty. We agree that we are called to something more than a simple lifestyle based on the good and frugal use of possessions and property. The call is to a lifestyle of solidarity, sharing the precarity of the poor, learning to live with uncertainty and insecurity, trust-

ing and depending on God. But it is not a call to dehumanizing destitution! Beauty and cleanliness need not be sacrificed. And community provides a different kind of wealth and security based on a shared faith and love.

I joined a group gathered under a scowling face of Dorothy with the admonition "NO HAVING FUN!". However, we proceeded to tell stories of fun-filled and hope-filled actions and protests, like the group of seven who took their protest against militarism to an island in a small lake on an army base near Omaha. Forty soldiers responded, gathering them into a boat which sank on the return voyage with the soldiers floundering in riot gear. I tell the story of Bill Payne in his tuxedo crashing the Cardinal's dinner in Toronto.

As the sun goes down over the desert

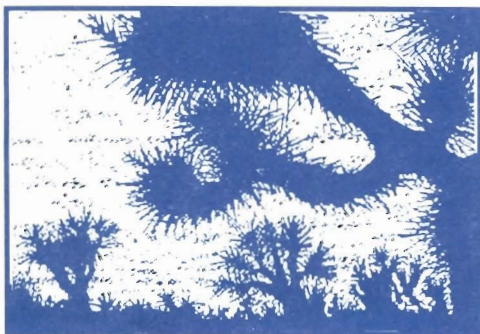
all of us gather together in the church for prayer, song and inspiration. The inspiration comes from Anne Symens-Bucher and Larry Holben. Anne speaks of the gifts she has received from the Catholic Worker movement; great friends, challenging community, how to respond to the marginalized, a tradition of nonviolence, and an abiding sense of God's love. Larry picks up the theme of love and situates it within the protest at the Los Angeles Cathedral where touching the heart of the Cardinal is more important than winning, the work with street people where our presence must be a grace without being a judgment and the Test Site where holding the guards, engineers, and politicians in our hearts must precede our trespass.

On Saturday, more round tables. I find (continued on next page)

Lenten Desert Experience XVII

April 3-5, 1998

*What Did You Go Out
Into the Desert to See?*



Retreat with Joanna
Macy, April 9 & 10
(see poster inside)



75 Women were arrested at the Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test Site on Nov. 9, 1997 in celebration of Dorothy Day's 100th birthday. This picture shows the women in the Test Site "jail" with the Test Site in the background. Another "sub-critical" underground nuclear weapons test is scheduled for this spring.

(continued from front page)

my way to Sr. Pat McCarthy's session on Dorothy Day and Nonviolence and discover that Dorothy was not a pacifist before becoming a Catholic. She generally opposed war because it was the poor who get killed in war, but the belief in the mystical body of Christ brought her to a stance of total nonviolence. During the Second World War she asked Catholic Worker Houses who could not accept pacifism to change their names. The number of Catholic Worker Houses dropped from 36 to 11.

The tone changes in the evening. We are in the church again and the leaders of Nevada Desert Experience speak to us. Louie Vitale, the Franciscan Father of NDE, tells us that our continued protest at the Nuclear Test Site is still needed because, although the US government signed the latest Test Ban Treaty, it did so with 3 safeguards: 1- that the stockpile of nuclear weapons be maintained as safe and reliable (requiring periodic tests); 2- that nuclear research laboratories be kept in operation; and 3- that the Nevada Test Site be maintained in readiness to resume large scale testing if any other nation violates the Test Ban Treaty (3,461 workers with a \$4.5 billion budget). Corbin Harney, spiritual leader of the Western Shoshone Nation on whose land the Test Site is located welcomed us and thanked us for coming to witness against the desecration of his ancestral lands. We will receive permits to "Gather, Go and Come" on this land from the Western Shoshone National Council.

Standing at the barbed wire Sunday morning, beside the waving peace prayer-flags made yesterday by the children, tears well up as I survey the most contaminated sore on the skin of Mother Earth- the Nevada Test Site. And tears come again as 300 Catholic Workers and friends pray and sing, the poignancy highlighted by the two

beautiful children standing at the altar as we celebrate and share eucharist. As the final hymn begins so does the walk to the gates. Amanda, Eric and I, the Ontario, Canada contingent, choose to cross the line by way of the newly cut fence and together with 30 others wander singing and praying out in the forbidden desert. One lone guard comes to us and informs us that we can wander as long and as far as we want, but that no one will be processed out of the pens until all are corralled. Slowly we walk towards our captivity.

As Ched Myers leads us in freedom songs in our chainlink jail, into which we have knowingly and conscientiously walked, I feel in my bones the truth of our Catholic Worker strategy of creating something new in the shell of the old. The shell here is real and palpable, but so too is the new life being created, undaunted by the powers and principalities arrayed against it. I'm glad I came.

Bob is a member of the Toronto Catholic Worker community.



75 men pose in the "chainlink jail" after being arrested for trespassing onto the Nevada Test Site on Nov. 9, 1997 in honor of Dorothy Day's 100th birthday.

COMMENTS ON DOROTHY DAY'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

"It seemed appropriate that the life of a person so devoted to nonviolence would be celebrated at the center of the world's greatest acts of violence."

-Jean Basinger, Des Moines, IA

"It was inspiring to see, once again, the number of young people searching for the Holy and giving of themselves for the Catholic Worker struggle."

-Phil & Kathy Dahl-Bredine, Silver City, NM

"Thanks to everyone for one of the most wonderful weekends of my life. The liturgy at the Test Site will carry us for months..."

-Rosalie Riegle, Saginaw, MI

"It was good to be at the Test Site, it's business as usual there."

-Frits ter Kuile, The Netherlands

"The experience renewed and warmed places in my spirit"

-Sabine Henrie, Berkeley, CA



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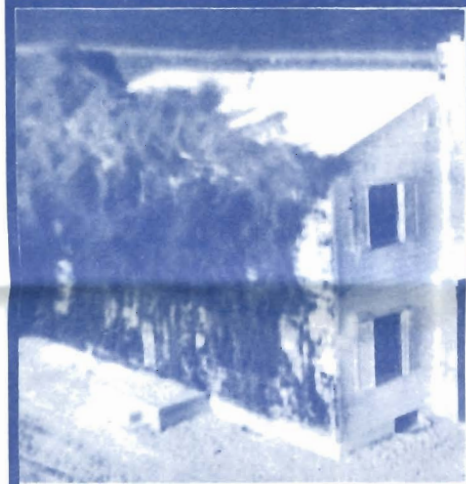
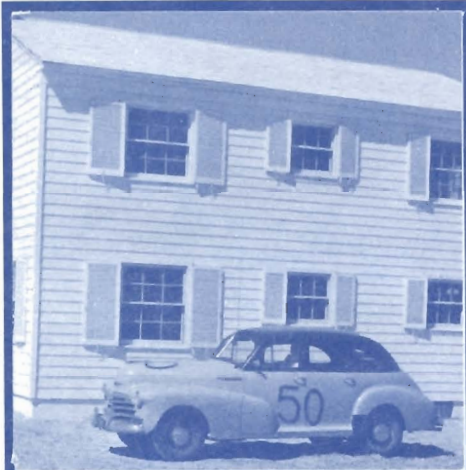
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PASSIVE RESISTANCE



I'm teaching those who will step across the line to be arrested that language can be violent, too, as yesterday, when they taunted the guide on the government bus tour of the Nevada Nuclear Test Site, blamed her for the puddled aluminum homes, the re-bar peeled

off the bank vaults like melted licorice sticks, the craters that looked like the earth sucked in its cheeks and held its breath. I've given them a "box of words"—"neon," "casino," "angel"—to keep their righteousness from bursting forth. I'm reading them my own bad lines to help them over the hurdle

of fear. But I came to Las Vegas with a secret motive—to drop a C-note for my father, one year dead. I didn't attend the unveiling of his stone, not wishing to show him respect, knowing that under his coat of clay, he was still a threat, that his half-life decayed into mine.

Last night I clung to roulette as if to the helm of some ghost ship. It took three hours to lose sixty bucks. I bet his birthday a dozen times, won once and pulled ahead. The slot machines rolled ripe cherries into my lap. My father adored, in the sense of worshipped, this cousin

to Disney World, with its waitresses dressed as slave girls, clockless rooms, automatic change machines, Glitter Gulch's neon canyons. Racing form, fishing dock or poker chips, he was always chumming for luck. That is the gambler's lot—to live in the seconds *before* the dice run

aground on the felt or the racehorse pins the jockey's silks to the wind. Now my students write faster under the plain-faced clock, cramming all their passion into eight lines, using ten of the words which do not include "justice," "bomb," "Nagasaki," or "atomic." Be personal,

I said—complicitous, not haughty. Imagine yourself on the wooden bleachers happy to watch the desert lit from below by the incandescent palsy of an underground bomb. Invent a science that could prosper from 800 tests. Is evil a force or a lack, like the shadow that carves the crescent

moon? Tomorrow, they'll return to the Site, armed with hats, canteens sunscreen and towels. They'll alert the police, tape their wrists for the handcuffs. Tonight I'll lose the last forty dollars in a kind of mechanical keening, playing the slots, craps, roulette again, games without a bluff.

I won't strew a bucket of chips on the floor to watch human beings grovel, the way that my father would. I'll bet his birthday and deathday. I'll lose without contempt for the gamblers, without resisting the odds, doom in my emptying pockets as I near what must have been ground-zero

for him. I'll offer this peaceful protest against the violence he exacted as his due. Let these be the last wages of Philip Steine. Let them be clawed aside by the croupier, squandered like the origami cranes folded in yesterday's seminar to nosedive onto the hottest spot in the world while the disobedient cross the line.

Copyright 1995 by Enid Shomer. This poem was first published in *Poetry* magazine, and in *Best American Poems* 1996. It appears in Shomer's new book, *Black Drum* just published by the University of Arkansas Press.

LEFT: A house built for destruction by an above ground nuclear weapon test.

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December 31, 1999

At midnite as we enter the new millenium we will gather with religious leaders from around the nation and have a candle-lit procession onto the Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test Site. Mark your calendar!

The Power of Love: Peacemaking in Our Day

Friday, Feb. 13, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

St. Joseph Basilica, 1109 Chestnut St., Alameda, CA

A fabulously fun and faith-filled evening of fellowship, music with Jesse Manibusan, spoken word, movement and visual media.

Sponsored by Nevada Desert Experience and Two by Two Ministries

For info: Jesse Manibusan (510) 523-3370 or Cindy Pile (510) 446-7996

DESERT VOICES

Franciscan Friars of California

NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE

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BAY AREA CARAVAN TO THE TEST SITE!

A caravan will be traveling from the San Francisco Bay Area to Las Vegas after the Good Friday Worship & Witness at Lawrence Livermore Labs on April 10, 6:30 a.m. Caravan members will arrive in time to participate in weekend activities planned by Nevada Desert Experience and Healing Global Wounds. For more info, call the Livermore Conversion Project at (510) 832-4347.

HEALING GLOBAL WOUNDS

April 10-13, Nevada Test Site
featuring Winona LaDuke, Green Party
1996 Vice-Presidential Candidate and
voice for Native American environmental-
ism. For info: Jenifer Viereck, 6060A Free-
dom Blvd., Aptos, CA 95003, Phone/Fax
(408) 661-0445, e-mail:
hgw@scruznet.com

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO SUBCRITICAL NUCLEAR WEAPON TESTS

Four Underground Nuclear Weapons Tests are scheduled for this
year at the Nevada Test Site!

In the Bay Area, on the day of the test, join us for a noon vigil at Bechtel's headquarters in San Francisco, 50 Beale St. (near Embarcadero BART station, half a block south of Market)

In Las Vegas, on the day of the test, join us for a 5 p.m. vigil outside Bechtel Nevada offices at 2621 Losee Rd. (between Lake Mead and Cheyenne, see map on inside poster)

☐ YES! Please call me and remind me of the vigils that will be held on the day a subcritical test is scheduled (four underground nuclear weapons tests are scheduled for this year) and any other important upcoming events.

☐ I can help call others about the vigils.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (s/ Fax): _____

Organization: _____

In Bay Area return to: Nevada Desert Experience, P. O. Box 7849, Oakland, CA 94601 (phone: 510 / 446-7996)

In Las Vegas return to: Nevada Desert Experience, P. O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127 (phone: 702 / 646-4814)

LENTEN DESERT

"What did you go out

LENTEN DESERT EXPERIENCE XVII: APRIL 3 - 5, 1998

with Gerry Hair and Julia Occhiogrosso

Holy Family Catholic Church, 4490 Mountain Vista, Las Vegas
and at the Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test Site

What did you go out into the desert to see? Our movement to resist nuclear weapons is sustained by the experience of the desert. We invite you to come to the place that for thousands of years has lured the hearts of those who seek God. It is a place of paradoxes: silence and sound; aloneness and community; God present, God absent; wilderness and domestication. Come to the desert and say no to deadly weapons of mass destruction and say yes to the deepening of the spiritual life which sustains our work for peace and justice.

Gerry Hair has been a Retreat and Spiritual Director for 30 years. He currently has a spiritual ministry in Sacramento and the Bay Area.

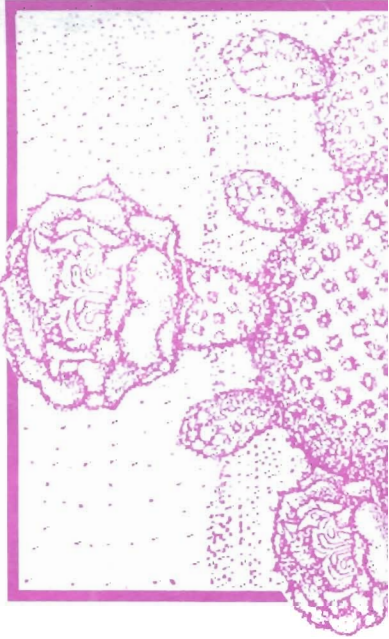
Julia Occhiogrosso is co-director of Nevada Desert Experience.

Cindy Pile is Education Director of Nevada



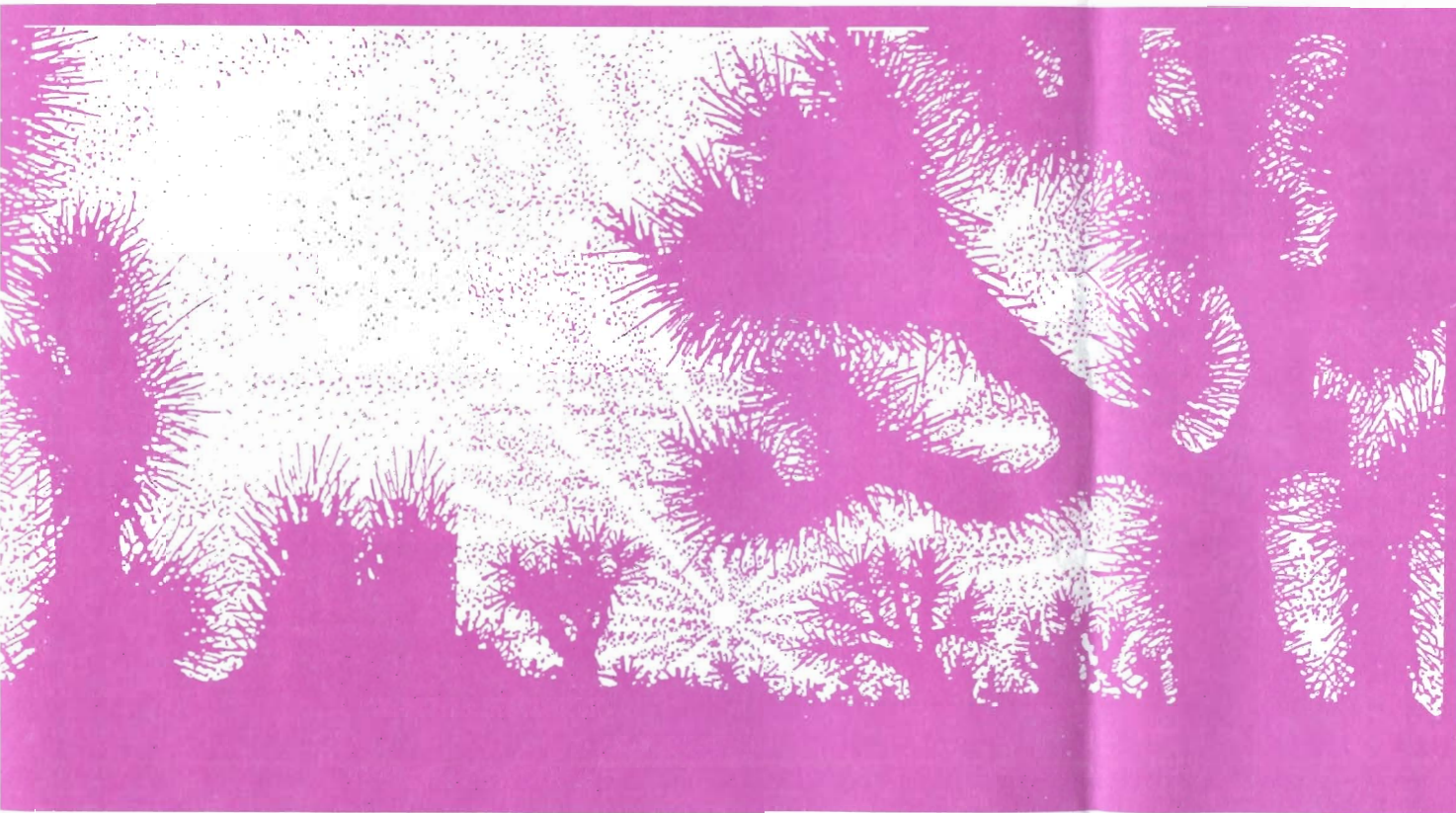
A THREE DAY

Ash Wednesday



T EXPERIENCE XVII

t into the desert to see?"



Holy Week Walk

April 5 - 10: Join Brother David Buer, OFM on a 65 mile pilgrimage from Las Vegas to the Nevada Nuclear Test Site.

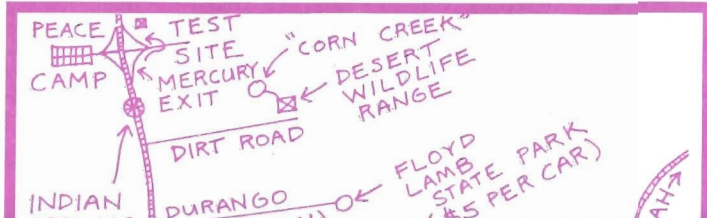
April 5, Sunday, 7:30 a.m.: Send-Off Ceremony for Holy Week Walkers at Bechtel / D.O.E. offices, 2621 Losee Rd.

Nuclear Stations of the Cross

Good Friday, April 10, 2 p.m. Nevada Nuclear Test Site, Mercury gate.

Easter Vigil Mass

8 p.m. Saturday night, April 11 at Healing Global Wounds Event (at Peace Camp)



DAYS OF RECONNECTION & RENEWAL

SCHEDULE:

Friday, April 3, Holy Family Catholic Church

4-7 p.m.: Registration

7-9 p.m.: Evening Session: Introductions; Seeking God; Leaving the Road Behind
Taize Prayer

Saturday, April 4, Holy Family Catholic Church

8:30 a.m.: Morning Prayer

9-10:30 a.m.: Meeting the Holy One: Time Together / Time Alone

10:45-11:45: The Wilderness: Nuclear Weapon Proliferation Continues (Cindy Pile)

Noon: Lunch

1:30-3:30: Time in the Desert: The Sound of Silence

4:30-5:30: Sacred Creation: Sustenance for Peace and Justice Work

6:00 p.m.: Dinner

Sunday, April 5, Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test Site

7:30 a.m.: Send-Off for Holy Week Walkers at D.O.E. / Bechtel (2621 Losee Rd)

9:00 a.m.: Prayer Service at the Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test Site

11:00 a.m.: Re-Gather at Floyd Lamb State Park for Picnic and Closure Service

Clip & Mail to: Nevada Desert Experience, P. O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone(s): _____

Special Needs (diet, etc.): _____

☐ I will attend Lenten Desert Experience, enclosed is \$40 (\$30 before March 20)

☐ I will attend the Holy Thursday/Good Friday Retreat, enclosed is \$40 (\$30 before Mar. 26)

☐ I will attend the Ash Wednesday Retreat, enclosed is \$150.

☐ I would like to do the Holy Week Walk from Las Vegas to the Test Site

☐ I would like to sponsor Brother David at _____ per mile (65 miles) (donation enclosed)

☐ I will need housing space, give us 2 weeks notice!, there is no sleeping space at churches.

Hotel Information: Motel 6, Tropicana St. (closest) or Industrial Rd. 1-800-4-Motel6

Desert Retre

WITH

Louie Vitale, OFM

Co-founder of Nevada Desert Exp

February 25-28, 1998

at Peace Camp across from

Nevada Nuclear Weapons Tes

(65 miles North of Las Vegas)

Presentations also by

Marylia Kelly

Co-founder of Tri-Valley Cares, Liv

and

Jenifer Viereck

Coordinator of Healing Global W

Peace Camp is a camp. Retreatants should be prepared for a camping environment in cold weather. Motel rooms are available 13 miles away in Indian Springs and NDE will provide a daily shuttle there. NDE will provide most meals and the Peace Camp.

(Indian Springs Motel: (702) 879-3777)

NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE, P. O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127

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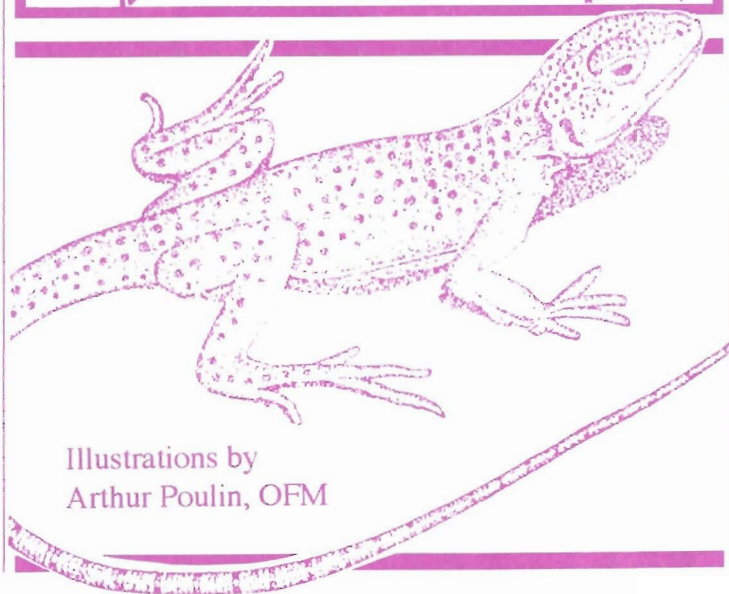
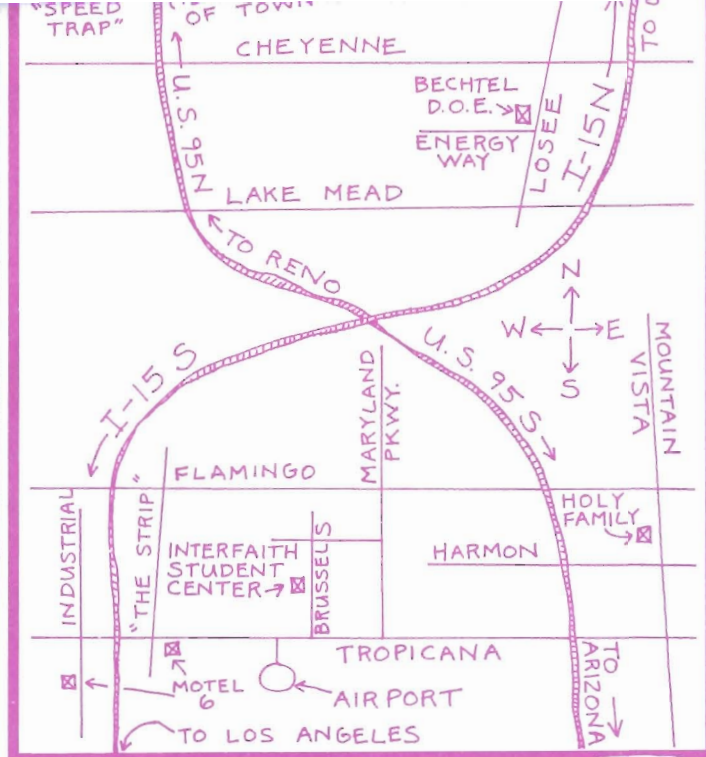
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Illustrations by
Arthur Poulin, OFM

Retreat with Joanna Macy

Holy Thursday & Good Friday

April 9 & 10, 1998

Interfaith Student Center, 4765 Brussels, Las Vegas, NV
& at the Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test Site

Here by a place of continuing desecration, we come together to rededicate our lives to peace and justice for all beings. As we confront together our nation's madness -- its ongoing commitment to the making and testing of nuclear weapons-- we prayerfully and gratefully deepen our connections to life and each other. How else would you want to spend Holy Thursday and Good Friday-- but with kindred souls in a spot that spells danger to our entire world? Our days together will include heart conversations with God, the Buddha, ourselves, and each other-- and with the exquisite, fragile springtime desert. We will also take part in the traditional Nuclear Stations of the Cross at the Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test Site.

Joanna Macy is a Buddhist Teacher and long-time activist for nuclear responsibility. Known worldwide for her workshops and the interface between social action and spiritual breakthrough.

Her books include:

World as Lover, World as Self and
Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World (forthcoming)

RETREAT SCHEDULE:

Holy Thursday, April 9

Morning: Finding Kindred Souls

Afternoon: Sustaining the Gaze

Good Friday, April 10

Morning: Reconnecting with Earth

Afternoon: Nuclear Stations of the Cross

Closing: Committing to Life

as, NV 89127-0487, (702) 646-4814, fax (702) 631-5538, e-mail: nde@igc.apc.org.