

## Chuck Trapkus

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On December 21, 2000, Chuck Trapkus – a longtime Catholic Worker and peace and justice activist from Rock Island – died in an automobile accident on a highway east of the Quad Cities. Chuck is survived by a sister, Linda, and two sons Isaac and Paul. Chuck was born on October 21, 1959, in Rock Island. After high-school graduation, he worked at a local newspaper and later did a term of voluntary service in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1983, Chuck co-founded the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker House, an emergency shelter for homeless families in Rock Island. The Dorothy Day House was his residence and the Catholic Worker movement his vocation until his death. Since 1985, Chuck served as editor of the Catholic Radical, a bi-monthly newspaper featuring articles on vital issues of peace and justice, the challenges of modern Christian discipleship, and life at the Dorothy Day House. Making global connections on social-justice issues was important to Chuck. Recently, he was active in the international movement to boycott products manufactured in sweatshops. In 1992, he joined the Walk for a Peaceful Future in the Middle East, which traveled throughout Israel and Palestine until Israeli security forces physically abused and then jailed the walkers. In 1998, he was part of the Iraq Sanctions Challenge, a large international delegation that traveled to Iraq with food and medicine in violation of the decade-old sanctions imposed against the people of Iraq. A relentless critic of industrialism and the “digital revolution” in technology, Chuck wrote and worked extensively to promote simplicity, the blessings of manual labor, and community self-sufficiency. Chuck was a musician, talented artist and cartoonist, and even made some of his own clothes. Friends tell of him growing flax, turning that to fabric, and finally sewing a suit from it. Embracing the Catholic Worker movement tenets of voluntary poverty, service to the poor, and nonviolent resistance to injustice, Chuck dedicated his life, in the words of Dorothy Day, to “afflicting the comfortable and comforting the afflicted.” He was known to allies and opponents alike as one with clarity of thought, well-articulated arguments, and a quick wit. Brian Terrell, of the Strangers and Guests Catholic Worker in Maloy, Iowa, said of Chuck, “He contributed as much to Catholic Worker thought and practice as anyone since the movement’s founding. I would compare him to Ammon Hennacy in his commitment and passion.” Contact: Rev. Lawrence Morlan Church of St. Joseph, Rock Island, IL 309-794-9793