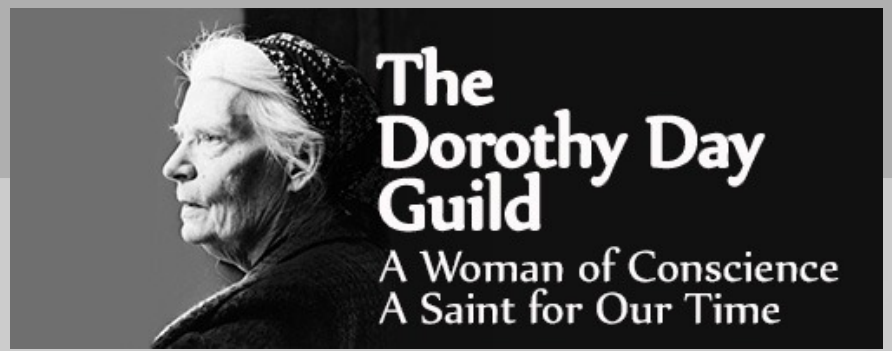


## IN OUR TIME

Newsletter of the Dorothy Day Guild  
Volume 2, Issue 2 Summer 2016



Dear Friends and Fellow Guild Members,

Greetings! In the lush green (and heat!) of the summer, the cause for Dorothy Day continues to grow and flourish.

Like two mighty engines, Dorothy Day had a dual passion for social justice and for intimacy with God that ran on parallel tracks throughout her life. It was her struggle, and ultimately her genius, to forever forge their connection. As a young girl, she questioned why there was more charity than there was justice. As a young woman, she joined causes advocating for radical change. As a new convert, she prayed to serve the poor. And finally, as co-founder of the Catholic Worker, she forged the “synthesis of the material and the spiritual” that she had yearned for and that had so long eluded her.

In February 1940, Dorothy restated the central vision of the Catholic Worker movement: to create “a new heaven and a new earth, wherein justice dwelleth.” That vision, continuing to this day, is the focus of this quarter’s newsletter. Some see Dorothy’s wedding of charity and justice as the greatest of her unique gifts to us. (She had many! Previous issues of the newsletter, available on our website, have explored her nonviolence and her incarnational faith.)

Dorothy was a journalist throughout her adult life, and she experienced and wrote about the seismic events of the twentieth century: wars, economic depression, anti-Semitism, racial conflict, the nuclear threat. But always she focused her readers’ consciences (and our own) on the light of the Gospels.

Dorothy insisted that since “we live in a time of gigantic evil,” it was hopeless to combat it “by any other means than that of sanctity.” That means striving without ceasing to change the social order. But first it means working always to transform oneself. Repeatedly, she’d urge young people at the Catholic Worker to go to daily Mass. “Scripture, on the one hand, and the Eucharist, the Word made flesh, on the other,” she wrote in 1972, “have in them the strength which no power on earth can withstand.”

Echoing St. Catherine of Siena whom Peter Maurin urged Dorothy to emulate (he also thought all Christians should be “announcers” of a new social order), Dorothy enjoins us “to cry out against injustice or by our silence to consent to it. If we keep silent, the very stones of the street will cry out.” We, in turn, cry out that her sainthood be recognized. We need her model of holiness: her traditional piety and her radical engagement that demonstrate what discipleship looks like in our time.

As always, we thank Msgr. Mustaciucolo and Cardinal Dolan for their constant support; and you, our faithful friends, for how you continue to buoy our efforts. (And if now is the time for you to renew your annual membership, our thanks in advance for doing so.) More than ever, we need you to voice your support with others, near and dear. Never has a conversation about Dorothy Day been known to be boring! Just think how our ranks would swell if every Guild member inspired another (membership form on p. 11). As Peter Maurin would say, we must “announce” our belief: in Dorothy Day we have a saint for our time.

CHARITY THAT LEAVES THE  
POOR PERSON AS HE IS, IS  
NOT SUFFICIENT. TRUE  
MERCY, THE MERCY GOD  
GIVES TO US AND TEACHES  
US, DEMANDS JUSTICE, IT  
DEMANDS THAT THE POOR  
FIND THE WAY TO BE  
POOR NO LONGER.

POPE FRANCIS

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME,  
BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO  
BRING GLAD TIDINGS TO THE POOR.  
HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY  
TO CAPTIVES AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT  
TO THE BLIND, TO LET THE OPPRESSED  
GO FREE, AND TO PROCLAIM A YEAR  
ACCEPTABLE TO THE LORD.  
LUKE 4: 18-19

## GOOD TALK

(We thank Mel Piehl for his generously giving *In Our Time* this interview. Author of **Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America** (Temple University Press, 1982), Mel is a professor of Humanities & History at Christ College — Valparaiso University.)

**IOT: One of Dorothy's gifts to us is her insistence that the Gospel is not only a personal ethic but also a practical ideal for society, right?**

Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker certainly believed and acted on the conviction that the Gospel brings "good news" not only for individuals but for society and, indeed, for the whole of creation. As to how "practical" this might be, I am struck by how little they calculated results, and simply trusted that the reign of God was somehow mysteriously growing like a mustard seed.

**Was there anything Pollyannish about her belief in the possibility for social change?**

Dorothy Day was the opposite of a naïve optimist. She had a profound awareness of the power of sin, both in individuals and society. She begins *The Long Loneliness* with a vivid description of going to one of those old-time Catholic confessional booths, and there having to confront and confess "only your ugly, gray, drab, monotonous sins." And she certainly saw plenty of manifestations of sin and evil in society as well. But she had an equally strong conviction and experience of the power of grace and forgiveness to overcome sin, as reflected in her phrase that "all is grace."

**Besides being a Catholic radical, she was also an American one, as Pope Francis pointed out...**

Dorothy Day was certainly quintessentially American in many respects. I sometimes tell students that were she ever to become a saint, she would likely be the first one who was the middle American daughter of a sports writer who covered baseball, horse racing, and boxing. She also carried in her heart and experience the general American belief in rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and during her years in the native radical movement had tried to advance those ideals. What Catholicism taught her beyond American ideology though was that life was a gift of God, that the true use of one's liberty was to love and serve others, and that happiness could not

From time to time, Dorothy would be asked, "Didn't Jesus say the poor would be with us always?" "Yes," she once replied, "but we are not content that there should be so many of them. The class structure is our making and by our consent, not God's, and we must do what we can do to change it."

only be pursued but found in the love of God. You could say that none of this contradicted her prior American experience, but rather deepened it. As she often said, quoting St. Augustine, “the bottle still smells of the liquor it once held.”

**Dorothy referred to the liturgy of the Mass as a basis for the Worker’s social action. How so?**

Dorothy Day’s conversion occurred at a time when Eucharistic theology and liturgical reform were just getting under way, and she drew a great deal on Father Virgil Michel of St. John’s (MN) Abbey and the liturgical movement. The crucial emphasis there was on developing a deeper understanding of the “body of Christ” as really present in the Eucharist, but also on the Church as the body of Christ in St. Paul’s sense; and further that, as she often said, “all are members or potential members of the body of Christ.” That is why the Fritz Eichenberg woodcut of the “Christ of the Breadlines” is so moving, and why she ends *The Long Loneliness* by saying, in echo of the disciples in Luke 24:35, “We know Him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread....”

**Some people understand Dorothy best as a “mystic in action,” while others see her more as a social activist and critic, downplaying her religiosity.**

It is certainly possible for some to applaud Dorothy Day as a social activist and critic without regard to her religious motivation.



*Apostles for nonviolence, Chavez and Day*

But I think it’s hard to read or study her for very long without seeing the centrality of faith to everything she said and did. It would be like appreciating Johann Sebastian Bach as a fine writer of texts (which he was) while discounting his music.

**It seems the Worker didn’t initiate so many causes as much as it actively supported them. How would you characterize its involvement?**

In one way that is certainly true: the Catholic Worker movement supported many causes compatible with its vision begun by others. It also, however, spawned many causes and organizations that eventually spun away from it, like the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists in the 1930s, the Association of Catholic Conscientious Objectors in the 1940s, and you could even say the Michael Harrington “socialism” reflected in *The Other America*. The greatest creation of Dorothy Day’s and

Peter Maurin’s CW, however, was the Catholic Worker movement itself.

**Dorothy was last imprisoned in support of Cesar Chavez and the farm workers. Was there a special affinity between the UFW and the Catholic Worker?**

Dorothy Day had been devoted to the cause of agricultural laborers ever since the 1930s, when she vigorously supported and visited the Southern Farm Tenants Union in Arkansas and elsewhere. Cesar Chavez’s movement was of special interest because of its strong Catholic connections and support, including from Monsignor George Higgins, a longtime Catholic activist whom Dorothy Day knew well.

**Dan Berrigan credited Dorothy’s consistency in saying “no” to all wars with his own conversion to pacifism in the 1960s. Today, the institutional Church is increasingly questioning**

*(Cont’d on p. 8)*

# SAINTLY MATTERS

There are thousands of saints recognized by the Catholic Church. Still, today canonization — the process of vetting and declaring a person a saint — is a long and rigorous one. Moreover, it is often disconcertingly expensive. For the many who support Dorothy Day's canonization, the cost of the process itself is one of the most troubling of "saintly matters." For others — even those who believe in Dorothy's sainthood — the expense of the process raises issues of justice that can become a stumbling block: Wouldn't the money be better spent serving the poor?

Historically, the canonization process is elaborate (think "expensive") precisely because of the importance the Church places on the outcome. What would be "unaffordable" would be to make a mistake. Accordingly, a high standard of proof is required, mandating painstaking research, documentation, and often translations that require the services of experts in medicine, theology, and Church law. U.S. Church officials have frequently used \$250,000 as a ballpark figure for the cost of conducting a cause, from the initial investigation at the diocesan level to the canonization Mass in St. Peter's Square. But costs can vary enormously, approaching as much as a million in some cases where extensive travel and years of investigation are necessary to gather, present, and review evidence.

As a result, in the past the process favored dioceses and religious orders that had the means and the will to launch and sustain a protracted campaign for a particular candidate. There has also been an underrepresentation of saints from among the laity, the poor, and distant and traditionally non-majority Catholic countries. Pope Francis has acted to help address these disparities. One of the most interesting is the renewed use of an eighteenth-century process known as "equivalent canonization." It allows people to be declared saints not only on the basis of miracles alone, for which the cost of verification is often quite high, but because there exists a "constant and common attestation" of the person's virtuous life and his or her "uninterrupted reputation for wonders."

Perhaps Dorothy's cause will follow along this "equivalent" path, since the miracle of the Catholic Worker's continuance and its uninterrupted practice of the works of mercy on a daily basis for the better part of a century attest to God's grace and active presence. Still, there are and will continue to be significant and unavoidable expenses along the way. Currently, for example, Dorothy's cause is working to complete the first or "diocesan" phase of the inquiry, which includes gathering authenticated copies of all her published and unpublished writings (estimated to be more than 8,000 pages). The second or "Roman" phase will begin only when this mountain of documentation, among other things, arrives at the Vatican to be examined by as many as nine reviewers, generally salaried lay workers.

To date, the costs for the diocesan phase have been provided by the Archdiocese of New York or raised through much-needed donations to the Dorothy Day Guild (thank you!). At the same time, there has been no discernible negative impact on contributions intended for the ongoing work of Catholic Worker communities around the world. That being said, major new expenses for Dorothy's cause will come with the eventual Roman phase.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves, as the questions about funding will persist and perhaps intensify: Even while acknowledging the legitimacy of professionally incurred services, how can we justify their outlay? And even if we can, how can we possibly raise the amounts needed?

Here we need to go back to the beginning of the Catholic Worker itself. Recall that in 1932, Peter Maurin introduced himself to Dorothy Day and asked her to start a newspaper based on Catholic Social Teaching. She immediately saw the need for such a paper to address the issues of the time. But practical journalist that she was, she as quickly put this question to Peter Maurin: "But where do we get the money?" His response has forever colored the movement: "In the history of the saints," he said, "capital was raised by prayer. God sends you what you need when you need it. You will be able to pay the printer. Just read the lives of the saints."

It was to the lives of those very saints — whose witness and works are such enduring examples of God's providence — that Dorothy turned to, again and again, for the rest of her life. They encouraged not only her trust in God, but also her daily resolve and life-long constancy to do God's will. By one day joining their "official" ranks, perhaps Dorothy herself will continue to inspire countless others to follow Christ in their daily lives and to embrace the fullness of the Gospel. And that will be a treasure beyond all price — worth sacrificing and praying for.

## At Root...

Peter Maurin opened up to Dorothy the vast riches of Catholic Social Teaching. Here are some gems:

*Don't make light of the works of the Holy Spirit that are being asked of you. You can do them if you want to. You can see that justice is done.*

**St. Catherine of Siena**

*Everyone who is a member of a community stands to the community as a part to the whole.*

**St. Thomas Aquinas**

*Working men have been surrendered, isolated and helpless, to the hard-heartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition...so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery.*

**Pope Leo XIII**

*Action for justice and participation in the transformation of the world — these are, in our judgment, constitutive dimensions in the preaching of the Gospel..*

**1971 Synod of Bishops**

*The Gospel calls individual Christians to live lives of honesty, integrity and concern for the common good. But it also calls Christians to create "circles of integrity", networks of solidarity which can expand to embrace and transform society by their prophetic witness.*

**Pope Francis**

*Love is the measure.*

**St. John of the Cross**





## VOX POP

The Church names a saint in part because “the people” first recognize someone’s holiness. The Guild initiated petition – asking that Dorothy be named a saint – continues to make its way across the country (available online and in bulk from the Guild office). Here is just a little of what they’re saying:

*I have been inspired by her simplicity and total dedication to the cause of social justice.*

**Mary Ann Motiuk**  
New Vernon, NJ

*Dorothy Day lived the life she preached.*

**Ethel B. Reese**  
Peekskill, NY

*We need a contemporary saint who leads us along the path of social justice and abundant love.*

**Sara Fieberg**  
Evanston, IL

*She cool!*  
**James S.**  
Chicago, IL

## DISPATCHES!

Significant progress continues to be made toward the completion of the diocesan phase of the inquiry. As last reported, a major component of the many requirements is conducting of interviews with eyewitnesses who can attest to Dorothy's holiness. The goal is to construct, as closely as possible given the passage of time, a 360 degree, in-depth view of her life. Approximately half of the projected fifty interviews have now taken place. Their transcriptions will be part of the formal application to be submitted to the Congregation of Saints in Rome.

Out of concern for the integrity of the process, and in accordance with longstanding Church tradition and canon law, all testimony is confidential. But it is safe to surmise that those "bearing witness" have done so from head and heart: not only telling facts or reconstructing events but also delving into their significance and profound meaning. We owe them our gratitude.



Another critical element now moving toward completion is assembling all of Dorothy's written works, published and unpublished. To date, all her books and bylined articles in *The Catholic Worker* have been collected. Still being gathered are approximately 300 articles in various publications. Most recently, the entire series of reports she wrote in 1923 for a New Orleans newspaper on the lives of "taxi dancers" and the clubs where they worked has been recovered. Under the byline, "by a girl reporter for *The Item* who worked in them – Dorothy Day," they carry her characteristic stamp of giving a human face to the poor.



Like the numerous bounties that are always happening in Catholic Worker communities, the Guild has been blessed recently with several new (and much needed!) volunteers. Alex Avitabile, author of a seminal bibliography of Dorothy and the Worker published in the 1970's, is lending his research expertise. And Alannah Boyle, about to start her senior year at Manhattan College, is helping to assemble materials. Both also help in welcoming witnesses, some of them from out of town, when they arrive to give testimony.



We sadly bid farewell to Takouhi Mosoian who, as part of the Catholic Charities department that houses the Guild, so ably and caringly helped us launch *In Our Time* by providing her technical and her design skills. We will miss her, but even the cause could not compete with the opportunity she had to travel abroad for six months!

Confronted with limited resources and our ongoing need to find "outside" support for our work (which in part account for the delayed publication of this summer issue), you can imagine how heartened we felt when the Sisters of St. Joseph in Springfield, MA, responded to our search for help. Not only did they have a graphic designer on their communications staff that they could enthusiastically recommend – Mary Jo Place (who is also knowledgeable about and interested in Dorothy Day) – but they also generously offered to make room in Mary Jo's busy schedule for our quarterly production needs. Ask and you shall receive, indeed! Thank you, Sisters! Thank you, Mary Jo!

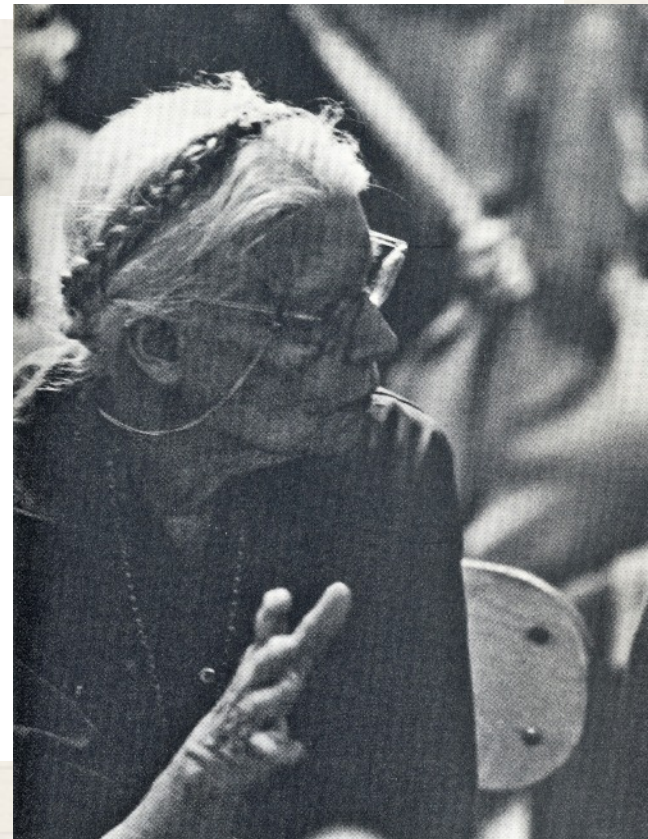
*("The Vine and the Branches" – a metaphor for Christian discipleship and an apt image for the growing Guild – inspired the iconography, above, by Catholic Worker artist, Ade Bethune.)*



*The sense of futility is one of the greatest evils of the greatest evils of the day... People say, "What can one person do, what is the sense of our small effort?" They cannot see that we can only lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time; we can be responsible only for the one action of the present moment. But we can beg for an increase of love in our hearts that will vitalize and transform all our individual actions, and know that God will take them and multiply them, as Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes.*

– Dorothy Day

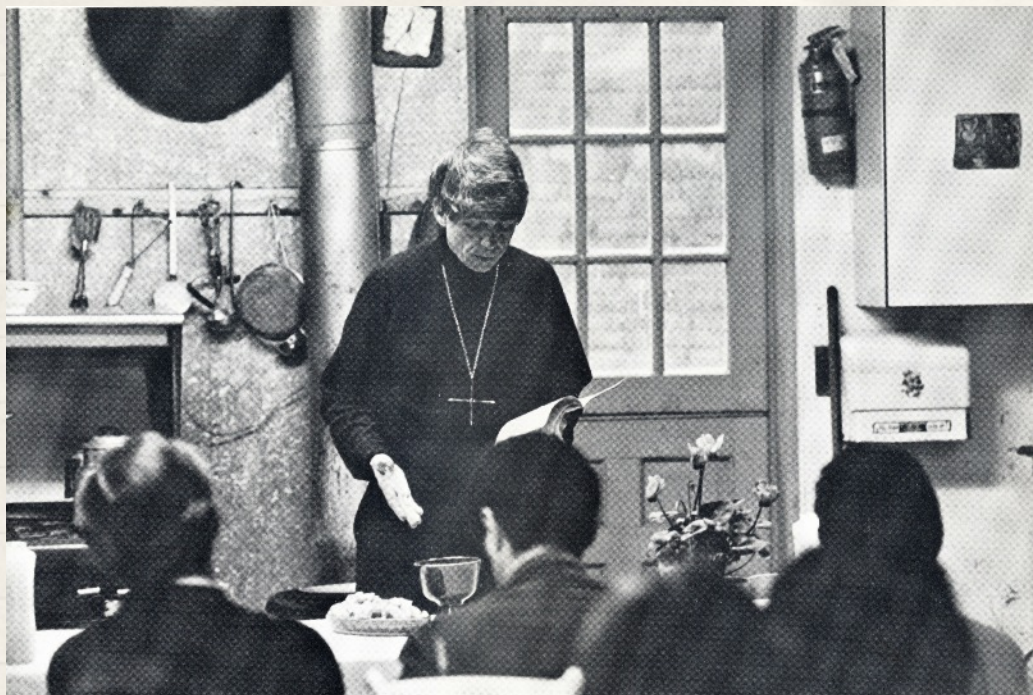
*What we would like to do is change the world – make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the poor, the workers, the destitute... we can, to a certain extent, change the world...*





*I had examples before me in the people of the Church, especially in lay-people and nuns, of those who lived to the hilt the life commended by the Gospel. Such were my people.*

– Daniel Berrigan



*Father Berrigan celebrating Mass at St. Joseph's House in New York City.*

*And such was Daniel Berrigan (1921-2016), Jesuit and peacemaker, poet and prophet.*



*Of Dorothy Day, he wrote, "When Dorothy enters its portals, the American church will undergo momentous changes, as though at a signal, a trumpet blast from a baroque ceiling.... It was she who kept insisting: There is no mercy without justice. Kept insisting: The most dreadful injustice of the modern world is the crime of war."*

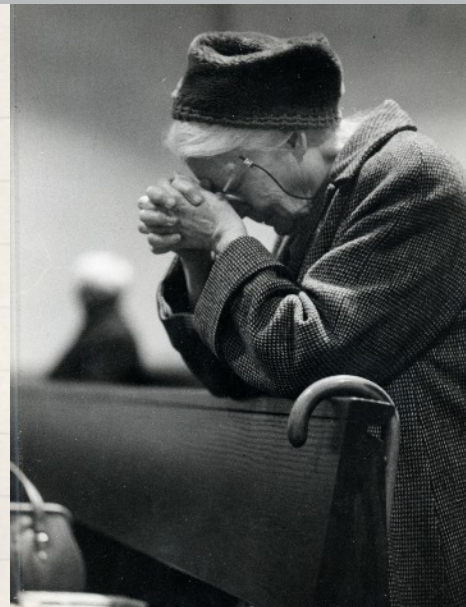


the certitudes of just-war thinking. Perhaps this is the most striking example of the efficacy of an absolute ideal over time?

The debate between the just-war teaching and pacifism is very old, going back to the early days of the Christian Church. Dorothy Day certainly helped revive pacifism within modern Catholicism, and was delighted by the renewed attention and respect it achieved at the Second Vatican Council and subsequently. How efficacious these developments have been or may yet become is difficult to say.

### Mel, any closing thoughts for us?

In the Lutheran tradition from which I come, all Christians are understood as “simultaneously saints and sinners.” Dorothy Day was highly aware of her own flaws and, she would say, sins. She is attractive to so many people, Catholics and non-Catholic alike because, unlike all too many moral and social reformers, she conveyed not a hint of smugness or self-righteousness. She is also, in my judgment, a truly penetrating religious writer – though not of any ordinary kind. If I may risk a bold comparison, she was like Martin Luther in being so strong in faith and bold in witness that she dared challenge the Church she loved for the sake of the Gospel. Dorothy Day shines so brightly because the light of God shone through her.



Dorothy visited striking autoworkers in Flint, Michigan, 1937; she was one of the few journalists allowed inside the plant.



## What's In a Name?

On May Day 1933, the habitués of New York City's Union Square – where 50,000 people gathered shoulder to shoulder to announce the coming revolution and to denounce the economic system they blamed for the savage Great Depression – scratched their heads over the eight-page tabloid thrust into their hands by Dorothy Day and a few brave friends. Those who could effortlessly parse the multisyllabic names of Russian revolutionists were totally puzzled by the paper's name: *The Catholic Worker*. They knew well *The Daily Worker*, the Communist paper, and its militant support for unions and strikes. Besides, didn't everyone know the Catholic Church was far more anti-Communist than it was pro-worker? Perhaps, they mused, this newest rag was simply some kind of Vatican plot.

But the paper's intent, though seemingly novel, was revolutionary in its own way. This became eminently clear in the editorial on page four. Addressed to “those who are huddling in shelters trying to escape the rain, for those who are walking the streets in the all but futile search for work, for those who think there is no hope for the future, no recognition for their plight,” *The Catholic Worker* announced to its readers that “the Catholic Church has a social program,” one that was working not only for readers' “spiritual, but for their material welfare.”





**By Rosalie Riegle**

*(Oral historian and writer Rosalie Riegle has been called the Studs Terkel of the Catholic Worker movement, having listened to and documented in several engaging collections the voices and experiences of hundreds of Catholic Workers. How grateful we are to be able to hear some of her own story.)*

As my father would have said, the Catholic Worker stuck in my craw. I first took it in when I met Dorothy Day in Saginaw, Michigan, back in 1968. Although I didn't know it then, that brief meeting changed my life forever.

Dorothy didn't talk much to the "peace people" who clustered around to meet her. Indeed, she sat at a small table and listened intently to a young black mother who was starting a group called the Welfare Rights League. That image has stayed with me forever as it's Dorothy in a nutshell: listening and learning and supporting people who were trying in their own ways to make a world where it's easier to be good. Even in her last years, Dorothy was still learning, and I learned from her that night that small and local is beautiful. I also learned from Dorothy that day that the connections were important – between war and the economy, between racism and the draft, between our rampant U.S. materialism and how the rest of the world lives.

Dorothy was in her seventies when I met her, but she didn't seem diminished. Instead she seemed concentrated, with her famous high cheekbones and piercing blue eyes. But she was tired from traveling up from Detroit, so the meeting didn't last long. Afterwards, I went with Frank Walsh to his bookstore. He loaded me down with books about Dorothy and the

Catholic Worker and regaled me with stories of how he had heard Dorothy speak at Xavier University in Cincinnati when he was a student, and how he and his friends later started the first Catholic Worker house in Saginaw, St. Alexis House.

I read voraciously about Dorothy and the movement she co-founded, but I couldn't see to make the adjustments necessary to actually be a someone called a Catholic Worker. So I coated the lump in my craw with loved busyness, with going to school and teaching and raising daughters and making some mild mischief at the Pentagon. It stayed in my throat, a sometimes uncomfortable irritant, for almost fifteen years. Sometimes at a party I'd feel not just alone, but lonely. Not a loneliness for God, exactly, but a loneliness to be with people who thought like I did, a loneliness for a community of like-minded souls. I read Dorothy's autobiography over and over and the ending always moved me. It still does.

One day I decided to write an oral history of the Catholic Worker movement and get it out of my system once and for all. After ten years of work, I coughed up a book – *Voices from the Catholic Worker* – where I acted as a megaphone for over 200 Workers, many of whom had known and lived with Dorothy. The lump remained, even though I had written myself into a welcoming national Worker community.

A few years later, children grown and marriage gone, I finally coughed up the lump and co-founded the Mustard Seed of Saginaw with Sr. Leona Sullivan and the late Jeannine Coallier. We invited homeless women and their children to live with us in an old but spacious clapboard house on Saginaw's East Side.

When I lived in a big house in the suburbs as a confused middle-aged mother drowning in materialism, I remember lamenting that when you own a lot of stuff, you become nothing but a stuff-owner. Of course, when I moved into a Catholic Worker house, I realized that you still deal with a lot of stuff – all the wonderful cast-offs that people donate so that you can live simply and they can buy new sheets. We cooked with donated food, wore really nice cast-off clothing, just as our guests did, and shared whatever we had with the women and children who lived with us.

*(Cont'd on p. 10)*

(Cont'd from p. 9)

We also addressed war and the racism by hosting both parties and protests, and had a sometimes successful community garden. Mostly we just tried to learn to love as Jesus loved and Dorothy taught us. My ten years living in a Catholic Worker house were exciting, fulfilling, and ultimately exhausting. In addition to working at the Mustard Seed, I taught half-time at Saginaw Valley State University and published an oral biography of Dorothy, with portraits by people who had known and loved her.

By trying and failing and then trying again to provide personalist hospitality to women often suffering from violence or addiction, my appreciation for Dorothy grew. As Judith Gregory told me, "The most amazing thing about Dorothy is that she stayed." Dorothy remained at the Catholic Worker, year after year after year.

I didn't. After ten years, with aching knees and a tired soul, I realized that the house should be turned over to younger women, so I moved to a single-floor apartment in Evanston, Illinois, where I could be close to my grandchildren. I still have a "Christ room," co-founder Peter Maurin's word for the spare room families should have for the wayfarer and homeless, but it's a quiet existence, compared to my years in Saginaw.

I think in part because I needed to stay connected with the movement, I became more active in its resistance to war and in 2004 was arrested with seven other CWs for crossing the line and trespassing into Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. Whoee! We were facing a possible six-month prison sentence. This was a far cry from the mild protests and low-key arrests of earlier

times. I decided I'd better find out what I was getting into by talking to those who had been there with their bodies, so I began interviewing Catholic Workers and other resisters who engaged in civil disobedience in order to speak in the loudest way possible against U.S. war making. I needed to learn from them what it was like to go to jail, and I did.

In 2013, I published two books from this large oral history project. Conferences and book tours kept me in touch with the larger Catholic Worker community, but I still missed the bustle of our Saginaw house, where emergencies were always just around the corner. So when an opportunity came to be involved at Su Casa Catholic Worker I Chicago, I jumped into Catholic Worker life again.

Now, at least once a week, I travel to the south side of Chicago, to a neighborhood that's light years away from north side Evanston, physically and figuratively. There's no urban bustle on the south-side streets at Laffin and 50<sup>th</sup>, as there is in trendy Evanston, but there is a large former friary that houses a growing CW community and an inviting soup kitchen. Workers provide spiritual and physical healing to the neighborhood and for Spanish-speaking women and their children who are in need of housing, in addition to reaching out through a garden and in other creative ways. Dorothy always said that one shouldn't look at her but instead look at those who do the work, and I continue to try to do that.

Dorothy saw no contradiction between a deep spirituality, providing hospitality, and resisting war. For her, it was all of a piece, and it's this unifying aspect of Catholic Worker life that speaks the most to me. As I approach my 80<sup>th</sup> year, and begin life as a Benedictine oblate, again trying to follow Dorothy's example, I'm learning that one doesn't have to live in a Catholic Worker house to live Catholic Worker ideals. As Dorothy's tombstone says, "Deo Gratias."





(Cont'd from p. 8)

The “social program” held out was a heady one, based on a mix of papal encyclicals, Church history, the prophets of Israel, insights of the patristic era, the Thomistic doctrine of the common good, and the Sermon on the Mount – all vital components of Church teaching which Peter Maurin, whom Dorothy Day always credited as being the co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, had introduced her to. (She wrote later in *The Long Loneliness* that at the time of her conversion, “I knew nothing of the social teaching of the Church at that time. I had never heard of the encyclicals.”)

But Peter Maurin was more than a willing teacher, and Dorothy Day far more than simply an eager student. Together they yearned “to build a new society within the shell of the old,” with, in Peter’s words, “a philosophy so old, it looks like new.” “Is it not possible,” the editorial asked, “to be radical and not an atheist? Is it not possible to protest, to expose, to complain, to point out abuses and demand reforms without desiring to overthrow religion?”

Peter’s solution – captured in one of his “Easy Essays” featured on the tabloid’s front page – was to “blow the lid off” the Church’s social teaching, a body of thought that he felt had been hidden by Catholic scholars who, in his words, had “wrapped it up in nice phraseology, placed it in a hermetic container and sat on the lid.” (In fact, Peter wanted to call the paper *The Catholic Radical* – from the Latin *radix*, for “root” – to emphasize the need to return to the lived example of the early Christians and to the inherently radical vision of the Gospels. Dorothy, however, demurred. As a reporter and editor, both before and after her conversion to Catholicism, she understood the ravages of poverty and what unemployment does to workers and their families. So she insisted that the name of the paper must be *The Catholic Worker*.)

Sold to this day for a penny a copy, the paper's early issues carried stories of workers, labor issues, and strikes – the latter often illegal. One story recounted how Catholic Workers picketed outside a New York department store notorious for underpaying its employees while mandating longer working hours:

There was mass picketing every Saturday afternoon during the Ohrbach strike, and every Saturday the police [ed. note: mostly Catholic] drove up with patrol wagons and loaded the pickets into them with their banners and took them to jail. When we entered the dispute with our slogans drawn from the writings of the Popes regarding the condition of labor, the police around Union Square were taken aback and did not know what to do. It was as though they were arresting the Holy Father himself, one of them said....

Today, a protest banner might well carry the declaration of Pope Benedict XVI: “The Church cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.”

Perhaps those first mystified readers of *The Catholic Worker* were right to sense they were encountering something new and subversive. For fidelity to the Gospel, as Dorothy and Peter understood so clearly, is both radical and revolutionary. What we have done to and for the least, we have done to God.

## In Our Time

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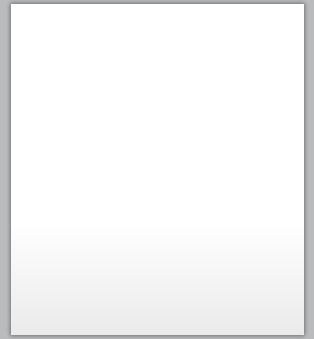
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INSTEAD OF AVOIDING IT  
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MINISTER TO THE SLAVES  
BUT TO DO AWAY WITH SLAVERY?"  
DOROTHY DAY

