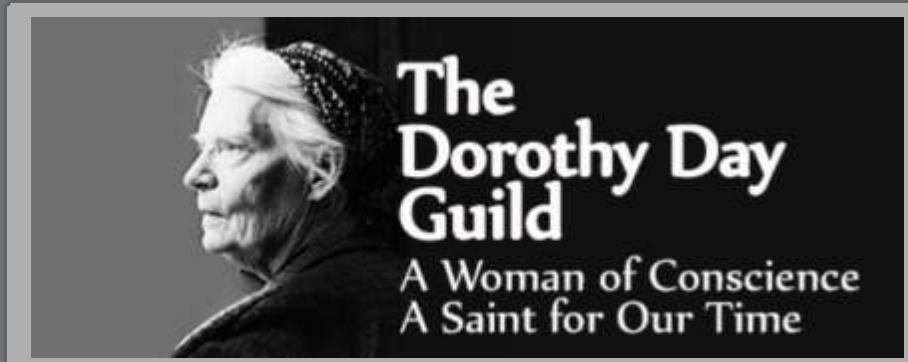


IN OUR TIME

Newsletter of the Dorothy Day Guild
Volume 3, Joint Issue
Winter 2016 and Spring 2017



Dear Friends and Supporters,

Greetings from the Guild! Winter miraculously became spring, and summer is beckoning. There is much news to share, and we have been wanting for some time to reach out and write you.

Earlier issues of this newsletter have explored the unique gifts Dorothy Day brings to the Church, gifts that give reason for the belief we share: truly, she is a saint for our time. This joint issue, the final one on this theme (though hardly exhaustive!) focuses on Dorothy as a "flesh and blood" woman. A woman who knew love in all its human fullness. As Robert Ellsberg points out in "Sainthood Matters" (see p. 8), there are remarkably few saints who can claim that.

And there may be even fewer opportunities to talk with relatives of saints, potential or otherwise! We are honored to be able to "sit down" in "Good Talk" (starting on p. 2) with Kate and Martha Hennessy, two of Dorothy Day's nine grandchildren. One of Dorothy's favorite quotes from her cherished Dostoyevsky inspired the title of Kate's tender new book, *The World Will Be Saved by Beauty*. Dorothy would often add her own coda. "And what is more beautiful than love?"

Though she encountered a multitude of challenges in her life, Dorothy Day clung to her core conviction as expressed by another spiritual companion, St. John of the Cross, "Love is the measure." No matter that she failed at times, that she had her weaknesses, her blind spots. The importance of saints' lives — Dorothy's certainly — lies less in their perfection and more in their passion and purpose. In the words of Pope Francis, what animated their lives was that "they recognized God's love and they followed it with all their heart without reserve or hypocrisy."

The cause for the recognition of Dorothy Day's sainthood continues to gain momentum, propelled by a vitally important development: the engaging of a Roman postulator, Dr. Waldery Hilgemon (please see "Dispatches!" on p. 9). Though this brings increased pressure to raise additional monies, we know it will be lessened by your continued support. **If your annual membership has expired, thank you in advance for renewing it now (please see Guild Membership Form on p. 19).** And if you find yourself able to make a donation over and above your annual membership dues, this would be most timely.

We remain deeply grateful, indeed heartened, by the steadfast commitment of Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan and Postulator, Msgr. Gregory Mustaciolo, and are buoyed by the New York Archdiocese's faithful support, more than matching any funds the Guild generates.

In the end, through the example of Dorothy Day's life and the Catholic Worker movement she founded, we dare to say we are all her children and grandchildren. How many of us, echoing Thomas Merton, feel we might not have become (or remain) Christian, let alone Catholic, without her witness? She awakens our own hunger for God, our own faith, our own capacity for sacrifice — our own capacity to live the Gospel of love.

Joyfully, we are in her debt. And yours. Thank you for all you do to ensure that one day — in our time! — Dorothy Day will be proclaimed "saint."

LET US HELP ONE ANOTHER
TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO
STAKE EVERYTHING ON LOVE.
LET US HELP ONE ANOTHER AT
TIMES OF DIFFICULTY AND LIGHTEN
EACH OTHER'S BURDENS.
LOVE IS SOMETHING WE LEARN;
LOVE IS SOMETHING WE LIVE...
LOVE IS BORN AND CONSTANTLY
DEVELOPS AMID LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.
POPE FRANCIS

**The "Ichthus" image ("the sign of the fish") was used by the early Christians as an easily recognizable symbol for Jesus. Dorothy Day's saintliness, we pray, will become increasingly recognizable—easy for all to see.*

HE SAID TO HIM, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD, YOUR GOD, WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. THIS IS THE GREATEST AND THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

THE SECOND IS LIKE IT: YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. THE WHOLE LAW AND THE PROPHETS DEPEND ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS.

MATTHEW 22:37-40

GOOD TALK

Part 1

with Kate Hennessy

*(For this double issue of **In Our Time**, we are so happy to be able to share "good talk" with not only one but two of Dorothy Day's granddaughters, Kate and Martha Hennessy. Each generously indulged our many questions (for how often would we get a chance like this?). In light of her newest book, **Dorothy Day: The World Will be Saved by Beauty**, we ask Kate in **Part I** about Dorothy's more intimate, familial relationships. In **Part II**, sitting down with Martha in the same house of hospitality where her grandmother once lived, we talk about community.)*

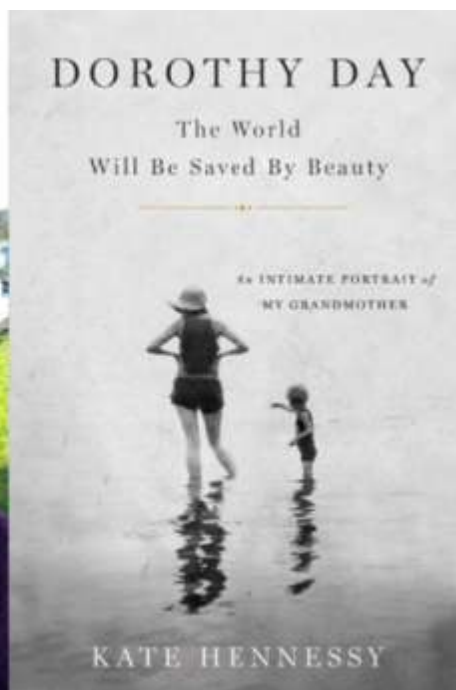
***In Our Time:* Kate, let us first thank you for your new book about your grandmother. And your mother. It's an illuminating and loving sequel to *The Long Loneliness*. You capture Dorothy's "restlessness" and how she struggled to understand it. Can you share a little more?**

You are most welcome! Dorothy's restlessness...you know, this is one of the aspects of her life that deeply resonated with me. I, too, have lived

with restlessness all my life and have struggled to understand it. When she said restlessness can be a sign of spiritual hunger, it made such sense to me. Not that this gives me any concrete answers, but it puts it in a context that is comforting and also makes it a powerful tool. Dorothy certainly used her restlessness in a wonderfully creative and concrete way, not only through founding the Catholic Worker movement, but also through keeping to probe her own spirituality and relationship with God.

As you movingly tell it, Dorothy's conversion is a lifelong story, not reducible to a single moment or event or timeframe. Though Tamar's birth was clearly a dramatic turning point....

Yes, the birth of my mother was such a tremendous moment for Dorothy. She dearly wanted a child, but was afraid that she wouldn't be able to as she had suffered a traumatic and dangerous abortion about six years previously. I think we can take for granted our ability to have children—people do it all the time! But there was something in my



grandmother that said this was a sacred act, a miracle, and she was not going to squander it. It was yet another one of those expressions of beauty, if you will, that she was so good at seeing and then forming as her foundation.

It was so touching to learn that Forster had kept all of Dorothy's love letters. And also that you initially had felt reluctant to read them. Can you talk some about their impact on you...and on Tamar?

My mother suffered greatly from the separation of her mother and father. She was an only child who longed for siblings, and I think because of this she had a heightened sense of family. Family was everything to her. I am so grateful that she found these letters for they showed her the love between her mother and father that she so longed for. And yes, I was reluctant to read them. I felt they weren't mine to read, but it was clearly important to my mother that I did read them. She wanted me to know of that love, too. Also, they reveal so much of Dorothy's voice and personality. This, too, my mother was delighted to once again see, for that was the Dorothy she remembered as a child—lively, passionate, funny—and she also wanted me to see that Dorothy.

Seems like there are certain adjectives that consistently come up in descriptions of Dorothy. Stubborn, willful, driven. And it sounds like she must have had to summon them all to have Tamar baptized, even though its full impact on the man she loved wouldn't become clear til years later....

Yes, my grandmother was stubborn, willful, and driven, but these adjectives don't come to mind to me in the context of my mother's baptism. Dorothy acted

so often on intuition and from a much deeper place than will, and I think that Tamar's baptism was one of these moments. Will, to me, implies a thought process, an intellectual process, and I never got the feeling—though I could be wrong—

that in the sense there never was a *decision* to baptize Tamar but an unexplained *compulsion*. And I doubt that she ever believed Forster would reject his child because she was baptized, and, of course, he didn't.

In the end you suggest it was her fear of being a hypocrite that led her to make the final break with Forster. She seemed to have little tolerance of that in herself—perhaps helping to account later for the rigor of her practice of her new found faith — always kind of pushing the envelope, you know?

I hesitate to say that it was either one thing or another that led to the final break-up with Forster. Human relations are so complex, and as my grandmother said, we often don't know what is in our own hearts and minds, never mind in others. But, yes, not being a hypocrite was essential to Forster's way of being, and Dorothy also had seen much hypocrisy in the radical circles of that time. Speaking of stubbornness, they both, I feel, were equally stubborn. Forster wasn't going to back down from his anti-marriage and anti-religion beliefs, and Dorothy wasn't going to compromise on her beliefs. This led to their break-up, and I think Dorothy wasn't going to squander that event either. This was a deep sacrifice that would remain on her mind for the rest of



her life. So, yes, I think ensuring she never drifted into hypocrisy was essential to her.

You say that you can't really understand Dorothy's story without understanding Tamar's. And you suggest that because Dorothy had to let go of an immense amount, she may have tried in some way to hold on to Tamar....

Again, the complexities of human relations—especially between a mother and daughter! Yes, I do believe that without the story of Dorothy as a mother, with all its love, misunderstandings, and wrong turns, and without the story of my mother as Dorothy's daughter, we would be so much poorer in our understanding of Dorothy. For one, how often do we have the opportunity to have a portrait of a possible saint as a mother? And one from the point of view of the family? I think both Dorothy and Tamar were in it together in terms of holding onto each other. It is one of the many mysteries of this story that two people who could not be more different from one another had such a tight bond. Sometimes I feel that if they were able to survive this relationship with their love for one another not only intact but never wavering, then what hope there is for all of us!

(Cont'd on p. 4)

In thinking about Dorothy's insistence on being faithful to the demands of the Gospel — and to the injunctions of the Church — that wry comment about Gandhi comes to mind. How it cost the nation a fortune to keep him living in poverty. It seems like it cost your family a lot to keep Dorothy "saintly"

Yes, I think it did cost my family a lot, though not in the ways that people often ask about. There has been a narrative for many years in the press, in academia, and even sometimes within the Catholic Worker itself, that Dorothy was a neglectful mother. "Indifferent" is another term that I have heard—Dorothy didn't have an indifferent bone in her body! When my mother would hear this, she would be so hurt and astounded that she literally could not reply. Dorothy was a deeply present (if not always wise) mother, and she was a deeply present (if not always wise) grandmother. She was a huge presence in our lives, much more so than in many families. Tamar called Dorothy heroic in terms of her sense of family. As for what it did cost us, I really can only speak on how I see it, as I am one of nine, and not only do we each have our own experiences and memories, but our own characters that responded differently to both Tamar and Dorothy. From my perspective, each of us has had to come to terms with my grandmother's beliefs in a real personal way, from issues of voluntary versus involuntary poverty, of pacifism, of finding one's vocation, of faith, and of the Church and Church teachings. And

the price of having to examine these things in your own life while observing Dorothy's life is the danger of believing you will never measure up. That is the greatest cost for us as I see it.

How fitting that as her granddaughter you help us to recognize that it wasn't only prayer and the sacraments that sustained Dorothy but the depth of her humanness — her capacity to love and to be loved....

Oh, I hope that this has come through to readers of my book. What is Dorothy but her humanness and how full of love she was? And isn't that her true source of power? Not seeing her as a plaster saint but fully human in all the messy and wondrous ways she expressed that? Isn't that how we are more fully able to realize our own conversions? And to understand our own relationship to God?

The search not only for love but also for vocation runs throughout your telling of both your grandmother's and mother's stories. And it invites, compels really, our own reflection. Perhaps you can share a little about your own search in light of their legacy....

Vocation, this sense of the work each of us is meant to do, was essential to both Dorothy and Tamar. It took me a long time to both understand what they were talking about, and how to examine my own desires and skills in terms of vocation. Most people speak of choosing one's career, not of finding one's vocation. Dorothy, who had a strong

sense of her vocation, said, "You will know your vocation by the joy it will bring you." Tamar, who was never able to find her vocation, said, "Work is so healing." No mention of salaries in either of these statements! People often ask me to relate a memory of my grandmother particularly when I became aware of who she was and what she was doing. I have to admit that what impressed me the most was not the Catholic Worker or her public persona, but it was watching her at her typewriter. I was amazed that she was a writer—writing was *her* vocation, she said—and at the age of seven I was certain that was what I was going to do myself. But I came up against all the demons—fear and self-doubt, and not sure of how to go about it in a way that would earn me a living. Peter Maurin used to say that if you want to know what it means to live in voluntary poverty while following your vocation, then look to artists, musicians, and writers. Finding and following your vocation can lead you into a variety of trouble, and I had to not only push through the fear and self-doubt of whether I was good enough, but get myself to a position where I could be poor in a way that did not impede my writing. Financial anxiety is a creative killer. And to find this balance is not simple. I've made plenty of mistakes (debt being the worst) and wasted far too much time second-guessing myself and thinking that perhaps I should be choosing a career.

If I could say anything to my younger self, I'd say, "Don't fight your call to your vocation. Give in to it, no matter what. You'll just waste precious time."



Throughout her life, Dorothy worked as a journalist and writer. In 1931, in need of cash, she wrote a newspaper column, "True Story Fictionalized" for the *Staten Island Advance* which was recently discovered by historian Anne Klejment. In the Spring 2017 issue of *U.S. Catholic Historian*, Anne writes, "The fictionalized family resembled her idyllic, pre-conversion domestic life with her partner and their daughter. However, Dorothy and Bill, the fictionalized couple, were husband and wife, who also had two sons. Still, Day vicariously explored what it could mean to live as a Catholic wife and mother in an intact nuclear family.... In an era rife with nativism, racism, and anti-Catholicism, she portrayed Catholics as good neighbors who helped to sustain a diverse community. Her exploration of the virtues of simple living and hospitality foreshadowed the Catholic Worker community...."

"True love is delicate and kind, full of gentle perception and understanding, full of beauty and grace, full of joy unutterable. There should be some flavor of this in all our love for others. We are all one. We are one flesh in the Mystical Body as man and woman are said to be one flesh in marriage. With such a love one would see all things new; we would begin to see people as they really are, as God sees them."

--Dorothy Day

GOOD TALK

Part 2

with Martha Hennessy

Martha suggested we meet together at Maryhouse to chat. Founded by her grandmother, Dorothy Day, as a house of hospitality for homeless women, it is one of many Catholic Worker houses, going back to the movement's beginning, that have graced New York's Lower East Side. The last five years of her life, she lived there, and in 1980, she died there, her daughter, Tamar, Martha's mother, at her side.

Enroute from the subway, I marvel at how this storied neighborhood of immigrants has gentrified. "Where do the poor go?" I can hear Dorothy's voice in the *Catholic Worker* newspaper. "Remember to ask Martha," I think, knowing that for several years she has come down from her native Vermont to live and work part time at Maryhouse.

Martha awaits me right inside the heavy opening door. I haven't been here in years, but I feel immediately at home. She whisks me off to the kitchen as the start of a quick tour first. Everything is slightly larger in size, the stove, the fridge, but not institutional. A mosaic-like outline of a dove decorates the wall above the sink. The floor is seriously worn, but like everything else, remarkably clean. I can't help but comment on that. Martha chidingly responds, "I'm such a Martha!" "Granny used to always say that. And if I have to wait till the day I die, this floor is going to be fixed. My husband has already fixed the front door...he could do this too."



Not only does Martha Hennessy look like her grandmother, she mirrors her passion for social justice and speaks widely on her experiences as an activist and peacemaker.

I chuckle at the thought of my ever living in an anarchistic, Catholic Worker house knowing that Martha's "Martha" would never be a match for my own. We go upstairs to Dorothy's room to talk more about community.

I had never been in this holy room before, and Martha seemed to sense my curiosity coupled with tentativeness. "It's pretty much as she left it." I glance quickly around and am immediately struck by the photograph at the bedside of a girlish Dorothy with Forster on the beach at Staten Island.

Sitting down across from one another, the light streaming in from the outside window, I recall the visit of Dorothy's mother, Grace, to a much earlier house of hospitality (recounted in Kate's new book).

"Grace said something about her daughter having a tendency to take on more than she could chew. And I admit: I've always been amused by Dorothy's almost glib

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description in *The Long Loneliness* of getting that first paper out, and then, practically before the print was dry on the page, opening the first house, because you couldn't write about what you didn't practice. All just like that!"

"Well, I think that's a wonderful definition of faith: taking on more than you can chew! Dorothy just had this incredible openness. She just was able to listen to the voice of God."

Glancing at that bedside photo again, I think aloud, "I guess that listening was pretty costly. Selfishly, I am so glad that Dorothy and Forster didn't work out...but somehow I feel we owe you and your family a lot of thanks."

"Well, there was suffering. Clearly, as a young woman, Dorothy had wanted a home, the warmth and the comfort of all that. And lots of children. She never imaged herself a single mother. And neither she, nor my mother, had wanted to be celibates. But both were, and in their thirties. And, like my mother, I grew up fatherless."

"Amazing in a way," Martha continues, "that after losing Forster, she continued to pour her love and passion into the next phase of her life, into the Catholic Worker movement, inspired by her meeting Peter Maurin."

"I've often tried to imagine that first meeting of theirs. Truly, a great spiritual encounter. Who would have guessed it though?"

"Well, again, this remarkable openness on her part. But I worry about the tendency of some people to divide her life into parts. Pre-conversion/post-conversion. Forster/Catholic Worker. Dorothy never thought that way or divided things up like this. It was all one."

"I mean that was her critique of Christianity going back to when she was a child. That the practice was only for Sundays, it wasn't about applying faithful behavior to your whole life."

"So maybe this is where community fits in?" I ask. "She always emphasized its importance together with the daily practice of the works of mercy."

"Absolutely. There are no false divisions in community. You remember the famous story when Robert Coles, the psychiatrist and author, came to visit the Worker? He was then a young medical student. Dorothy, sitting with a woman who had come to eat, aware that he was waiting, asked him whom did he want to speak to."

"She wasn't being coy?"

"No, she just didn't see separations, or that some are to be esteemed more than others. She was always about seeking connections. And community is a great teacher. There are no buffers!"

"I had a close friend, Martha, who vividly remembered her time volunteering at the Worker in the early 1960's. And she told me that what she admired most about Dorothy was that community didn't come at all naturally to her, yet she stuck with it."

"Well, she did love her privacy. Also having time for her books and her writing. And she struggled with daily conflict. Stanley Vishnewski [longtime Catholic Worker] liked to joke that when things got tough, Dorothy got on a bus!"

"To visit other houses with their own struggles, huh?"

"It's interesting, you know, that there is no pre-screening or much criteria considered for new community members. Whoever comes, comes. You get what you get!"

Martha gives a gentle sigh, explaining that Dorothy, like her, could be judgmental. "We just have to pray more."

"Talking about connections, can you talk to me a little more about your own personal connection to your grandmother. Not everyone has a grandmother who is a potential canonized saint...."

"I think of her as someone who was always planting seeds. You know, growing up in Vermont, I was always aware of the issues of war and poverty in the world. Granny would come visit us, and sometimes we'd go to church with her, and sometimes not. I never really understood the foundation of her faith until much later."

"But she was always planting seeds. As a child I remember receiving a postcard; this was when she was in Rome for the Second Vatican Council. She was fasting and praying with other women in hopes that the Church would take a more vigorous stand against nuclear weapons. She sent me this post card with a picture of an angel on it, telling me to pin it up to remind me to say my prayers."

"When years later our family's house burnt down, that little card somehow survived. Just one tiny seed, but it helped me to look back and find others."

"A big event...not till my 50's, mind you...was my son joining the military and training at Fort Benning, Georgia. There was a great possibility that he would have been sent to Iraq. He was discharged six weeks later because it was discovered he had a breathing problem that affected his basic training. Divine intervention on Dorothy's part perhaps!"

Martha doesn't elaborate. And I'm silenced by the obvious parallel: the overwhelming experience of joy that forged the faith of granddaughter and grandmother. One prompted by a son's return; one by a daughter's birth.

As if reading my mind, Martha says, "Dorothy never wanted a cult of personality. We each have to find our own way. But she really believed that love was the only solution. And she did seem to have a natural ability to hold empathy, to imagine and feel someone else's suffering.

"No wonder, as a young radical, she was attracted to that old I.W.W. slogan — 'An injury to one is an injury to all' "

"Well, for her, that was the lived reality of the Mystical Body of Christ. This brings us back to community again. That's what it teaches us. That we are all interdependent, we are all vulnerable, we are all human. Perhaps we women understand this more intuitively. Dorothy knew it in her bones. And she lived out of this reality. She gave me a definition of family that is much beyond biological, an example the world very much needs, I think."

"Perhaps that was the biting off of more than she could chew!"

"Maybe. But what a model! Truly, many "families" attracted her attention, love, and at times, worry. Our intimate one, my mother and my eight brothers and sisters, certainly. And Forster too who called daily the last years of her life. It included the sprawling family of the Catholic Worker around the country and beyond. There were the many personal friends and spiritual companions with whom she maintained a voluminous correspondence. The Church, indeed, and, I dare say, its "communion of saints" to whom she prayed. And always, always, the community of the poor. How appropriate it was that she lived and died here at Maryhouse."

- C.Z., Ed.



SAINTLY MATTERS

(This article by Robert Ellsberg, entitled "Dorothy in Love: New Letters Reveal the Frank Sexuality of a Possible Saint," is gratefully reprinted with permission of America magazine. [Published in issue of 11/15/2010, <http://www.americanmagazine.org/issue/755/ideas/dearest-forster>]

Robert is the editor-in-chief and publisher of Orbis Books. A former managing editor of the Catholic Worker, he worked with Dorothy Day the last five years of her life and is the editor of her published diaries and letters.)

Generally speaking, there is not much to say about the sex lives of the saints. Yes, they were great lovers of God, and if Bernini's famous sculpture "St. Teresa in Ecstasy" is any evidence, one can appreciate that such love was not merely platonic. But what about passionate, erotic, physical love between flesh-and-blood humans? Even if one looked carefully at the lives of the virgin martyrs and the celibate monks, priests and religious who dominate the religious calendar, it would be hard to fill a page on the subject of sex and holiness.

There is St. Augustine, who writes about his youthful search for "some object for my love." In different forms and persons, including his mistress of many years, he evidently found it. But in every case Augustine wants to show how the "clear waters" of love were invariably spoiled by the "black rivers of lust." Augustine describes his relationship with his unnamed mistress, the mother of his son, in these unflattering terms: "In those days I lived with a woman, not my lawful wedded wife, but a mistress whom I had chosen for no special reason but that my restless passions had alighted on her."

It is striking to compare Augustine's treatment with a similar passage in *The Long Loneliness*, the memoir of Dorothy Day, the American-born co-founder of the Catholic Worker. There she introduces the story of her love affair with Forster Batterham, and the role he played in hastening her spiritual journey: "The man I loved, with whom I entered into a common-law marriage, was an anarchist, an Englishman by descent, and a biologist." They met at a party in Greenwich Village in the early 1920s and soon thereafter began to live together—as she put it, "in the fullest sense of the phrase"—in a house on Staten Island.

Among their bohemian set there was nothing scandalous about such a relationship. It was evidently Dorothy who liked to think of it as a "common-law marriage." For Forster, who never masked his scorn for the "institution of the family," their relationship was simply a "comradeship." Nevertheless, she loved him "in every way." As she wrote: "I loved him for all he knew and pitied him for all he didn't know. I loved him for the odds and ends I had to fish out of his sweater pockets and for the sand and shells he brought in with his fishing. I loved his lean cold body as he got into bed smelling of the sea and I loved his integrity and stubborn pride."

Wait a minute! Day is here describing, without any hint of Augustine's obligatory shame or regret, her physical relationship with a man to whom she was not married. Needless to say, she was not yet a Catholic. Yet her point is to show how this lesson in love, this time of "natural happiness," as she called it, awakened her thirst for an even greater happiness. She began to pray during her walks and started to attend Mass. This religious impulse was strengthened when she discovered she was pregnant—an event that inspired a sense of gratitude so large that only God could receive it. With that came the

(Cont'd on p. 18)

At Root...

"Whenever I felt the beauty of the world in song or story, in the material universe around me, or glimpsed it in human love," Dorothy Day wrote, "I wanted to cry out with joy. The Psalms were an outlet for this enthusiasm of joy or grief." She also famously said (and who cannot at least partially identify?), "my strength returns to me with my cup of coffee and the reading of the Psalms." Here are just some of the verses she returned to again and again.

As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God.

Psalms 42:1

My soul shall be sated as with choice food, with joyous lips my mouth shall praise you!

I think of you upon my bed

I remember you through the watches of the night.

Psalms 63: 6-7

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all my being, bless [God's] holy name.

Psalms 103:1

I will speak openly of your testimonies without fear even before kings.

I delight in your commandments, which I dearly love.

I lift up my hands to your commandments; I study your statutes which I love.

Psalms 119: 46-48

Be still and know that I am God!

Psalms 46: 11



VOX POP

"The people"—historically, always the first to recognize someone's holiness—continue to sign the Guild petition (available at www.dorothydayguild.org), asking that Dorothy Day be named a saint:

She is a woman for our time: a single, Catholic woman of strong faith, loyal to the Church and committed to a lifestyle of simplicity, justice, and compassion for all.

**Dorothy Dwight, BVM
Chicago, IL**

I love the truth of her pain, struggles, her willingness to give her all in the areas into which she heard God calling her.

**Vivian Gilbert
Emmett, ID**

Yes, Yes, Yes!
**Anita Marcellis, SCNJ
Convent Station, NJ**

Her example needs to be held up in our times as an example of someone who lived the evangelical counsels of poverty, of community.

**Joseph Miller
Evanston, IL**

We need real people to become saints!
**Susan McNamara
Pullman, WA**

DISPATCHES!

The Cause for Dorothy Day has taken a bold step forward: securing the oversight of a Roman postulator. Dr. Waldery Hilgemon holds both a licentiate in Canon Law (J.C.L.) and a doctorate in the same field (J.C.D.). He has shepherded many causes to completion. As required, Dr. Hilgemon lives in Rome though causes from around the world have sought his expertise. His is a unique vocation. To learn more, you can visit his website, www.missiopastoralis.com.

Dr. Hilgemon will review all the work completed to date as part of the Cause's initial Diocesan Phase and guide the transition to the second (and final) Roman Phase.



The Cause has now obtained 99% of Dorothy Day's published work, due to the diligent efforts of Jeff Korgen, the Diocesan Phase Coordinator, and Alex Aitable, an early bibliographer of Day and the Catholic Worker movement. George Horton continues to supervise, regretting only that he never could find the time to bask in the almost 10,000 pages gathered to date! The many articles will be joined in volumes of 200 pages for the review of theological experts. The final volume (the remaining 1%) will be a volume of unsigned editorials in the *Catholic Worker*.



New York City's St. Patrick's Cathedral welcomes all to the celebration of a Mass for Dorothy Day in Our Lady's Chapel on the second Saturday of every month at 9:00 am (Fifth Avenue between 50th and 51st Streets). Dorothy would often make mention of churches she would drop into -- a veritable necklace strung throughout the neighborhoods of New York. St. Patrick's in the heart of midtown Manhattan was one of them.



Emeritus Pope Benedict described saints as being "living translations of the Gospel." The Guild continues to appreciate that the canonization process itself is layered and complex -- evidence of the importance the Church places on saints. It recognizes too that the process itself seemingly requires its own "translation." To help, we've included books on the historic roots and evolution of "saint making" in the bibliography found under the "To Learn More" section on the Guild's website (dorothydayguild.org). We invite you to visit.



Did you know that the Guild has its own Facebook page? Friend the Cause — and share it with others! And speaking about friends. Anthony Santella continues to faithfully and generously volunteer his time as the administrator for the Guild's social media presence.



The witness of Dorothy Day extends in many directions and to many people. Some, of course, knew her personally or worked with her directly. Others know her from her writings or from the vast amount of print and creative work she continues to inspire. The "Breaking Bread" column in this newsletter is dedicated to sharing the different stories of the diverse people whose lives she has impacted. Catholic and non-Catholic. We invite you to reflect on and share your own.

"Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, even with a crust, where there is companionship." Please email: cjzablotny@gmail.com. And enjoy reading Carmina Chapp's lovely reflection in this issue (p. 16).

("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 Final Word is Love...

(In her memoir, The Long Loneliness, Dorothy described her common law relationship with Forster. It was in and through their love — and the beauty of the natural world on Staten Island — she came to know of God.)

"He had all of the love of the English for the outdoors in all weather. He used to insist on walks no matter how cold or how rainy the day, and this dragging me away from my books, from my lethargy, into the country, made me begin to breathe. If breath is life, then I was beginning to be full of it because of him. I was filling my lungs with it, walking on the beach, resting on the pier beside him while he fished, rowing with him in the calm bay, walking through the fields and woods — a new experience entirely for me, one which brought me to life, and filled me with joy." (*The Long Loneliness*)

"The baby speaks of you often, and only the other day she gave me a sweet fervent kiss and said, 'Forster kisses you like that.' " (Letter, 9/10/29)

"I do love you so much, sweetheart, and miss you more than I thought possible. Even if we weren't together before, I at least had hopes of seeing you, and knowing you were there. Now, God knows when I'll see you again. Can't you realize how much happier we'd be together, in spite of differences of opinion, than we are apart?....Well, perhaps someday I can bulldoze you into marrying me. I certainly don't want to ever marry anybody else....Do write to me dearest sweetest, because I think of you and want you night and day." (Letter, 9/16/29)

"My feeling about our night together was one of sadness because we couldn't be always together. I feel that Tamar and I belong to you and when I am with you in that way it leaves me with a feeling of our close presence in my heart for weeks afterward. Aren't we ever going to be together again, sweetheart?...What do you say you marry me when I come up in the spring, and then I'll sell or rent the house and we'll come down here to live? Huh?" (Letter, 1/32)



"Sex is not at all taboo with me except outside of marriage. I am as free and unsuppressed as I ever was about it. I think the human body a beautiful thing, and the joys that a healthy body have are perfectly legitimate joys....St. Augustine says, 'If bodies please thee, praise God on occasion of them.' And I feel no sorrow for all the joys we have had in the past together...." (Letter, 12/10/32)

(This reflection of Dorothy's was the Postscript to The Long Loneliness. It lyrically expresses the essential charism of the Catholic Worker movement — poverty, community, and love found in Eucharistic companionship.)

We were just sitting there talking when lines of people began to form, saying, "We need bread." We could not say, "Go, be thou filled." If there were six small loaves and a few fishes, we had to divide them. There was always bread.

We were just sitting there talking and people moved in on us. Let those who can take it, take it. Some moved out and that made room for more. And somehow the walls expanded.

We were just sitting there talking and someone said "Let's all go live on a farm." It was as casual as all that, I often think. It just came about. It just happened. I found myself, a barren woman, the joyful mother of children. It is not always easy to be joyful, to keep in mind the duty of delight.

The most significant thing about The Catholic Worker is poverty, some say.

The most significant thing is community, others say. We are not alone anymore.

But the final word is love. At times it has been, in the words of Father Zossima, a harsh and dreadful thing, and our very faith in love has been tried through fire.

We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know him in the breaking of the bread, and we are not alone any more. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship.

We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community.

It all happened while we sat there talking, and it is still going on.



Having a Baby

by Dorothy Day

(Dorothy had written this story of Tamar's birth for her old friend Mike Gold who was editing the New Masses at the time (June 1928). A year later she was in Mexico City, working as a freelance journalist and living with her then three-year old daughter. Decades later, she recalled their visiting Diego Rivera whose murals she admired. "He looked at my daughter, saying, 'I know this little girl. Your article "Having a Baby" was reprinted all over the Soviet Union, in many languages. You ought to go over there and collect royalties.' " Perhaps no less fantastic a thought is that this article, among many others, will be read/reviewed by theological censors and sent on to Rome as part of the case for her canonization. Dorothy herself would re-read it, before the birth of each of her nine grandchildren.)



On Wednesday I received my white ticket, which entitled me to a baby at Bellevue. So far I had been using a red one, which admitted me to the clinic each week for a cursory examination. The nurse in charge seemed very reluctant about giving out the white one. She handed it to me, saying doubtfully, "You'll probably be late. They're all being late just now. And I gave them their tickets and just because they have them they run into the hospital at all times of the night and day, thinking their time is come, and find out they were wrong."

The clinic doctors acted very much disgusted, saying, "What in the world's the matter with you women? The wards are empty." And only a week before they were saying, "Stall off this baby of yours, can't you? The beds are all taken and even the corridors are crowded." The girl who sat next to me at the clinic that day was late the week before and I was astonished and discouraged to see her still there. She was a pretty, brown-eyed girl with sweet, full lips and a patient expression. She was only about eighteen and it was her first baby. She said, "Ma'am," no matter what I said to her. She seemed to have no curiosity and made no attempt to talk to the women about her; just sat there with her hands folded in her lap, patient, waiting. She did not look very large, but she bore herself clumsily, childishly.

There was one Greek who was most debonair. She wore a turban and a huge, pink, pearl necklace and earrings, a bright dress and flesh-colored stockings on still-slim legs. She made no attempt to huddle her coat around her as so many women do. She had to stand while waiting for the doctor, the place was so crowded, and she poised herself easily by the door, her head held high, her coat flung open, her full figure most graciously exposed. She rather flaunted herself, confident of her attractions. And because she was confident, she was most attractive.

When I got home that afternoon, thinking of her I put on my ivory beads and powdered my nose. I could not walk lightly and freely, but it was easy to strut.

There was another woman who was late, a great, gay, Irish wench who shouted raucously as she left the doctor's office, "The doctor sez they are tired of seeing me around and I don't blame them. I rushed over three times last week, thinking I was taken and I wasn't. They sez, 'The idea of your not knowing the pains when this is your third!' But I'm damned if I come in here again until they cart me in."

So, when I was philosophically preparing myself to hang around a month, waiting for my child to knock on the door, my pains started, twelve hours earlier than scheduled. I was in the bath tub reading a mystery novel by Agatha Christie when I felt the first pain and was

thrilled, both by the novel and the pain, and thought stubbornly to myself, "I must finish this book." And I did, before the next one struck fifteen minutes later.

"Carol!" I called. "The child will be born before tomorrow morning. I've had two pains."

"It's a false alarm," scoffed my cousin, but her knees began to tremble visibly because after all, according to all our figuring, I was due the next morning.

"Never mind. I'm going to the hospital to exchange my white ticket for Tamara Teresa"—for so I had euphoniously named her.

So Carol rushed out for a taxicab while I dressed myself haltingly, and a few minutes later we were crossing town in a Yellow, puffing on cigarettes and clutching each other as the taxi driver went over every bump in his anxiety for my welfare.

The driver breathed a sigh of relief as he left us at Bellevue, and so did we. We sat for half an hour or so in the receiving room, my case evidently not demanding immediate attention, and watched with interest the reception of other patients. The doctor, greeting us affably, asked which of us was the maternity case which so complimented me and amused Carol that our giggling tided us over any impatience we felt.

There was a Black woman with a tiny baby, born that morning, brought in on a stretcher. She kept sitting up, her child clutched to her bosom, yelling that she had an earache, and the doctor kept pushing her back. Carol, who suffers from the same complaint, said that she would rather have a baby than an earache, and I agreed with her.

Then there was a genial drunk, assisted in with difficulty by a cab driver and his fare, who kept insisting that he had been kicked by a large white horse. His injuries did not seem to be serious.

My turn came next, and as I was wheeled away in a chair by a pleasant, old orderly with whiskey breath, Carol's attention was attracted and diverted from my ordeal by the reception of a drowned man, or one almost drowned, from whom they were trying to elicit information about his wife, whether he was living with her, their address, religion, occupation, and birthplace—information which the man was totally unable to give.

For the next hour I received all the attention Carol would have desired for me -- attentions which I did not at all welcome. The nurse who ministered to me was a large, beautiful creature with marcelled hair and broad hips, which she flaunted about the small room with much grace. She was a flippant creature and talked of Douglas Fairbanks and the film she had seen



that afternoon, while she wielded a long razor with abandon.

Abandon. Abandon! What did that remind me of? Oh yes, the suitor who said I was lacking in abandon because I didn't respond to his advances.

Thinking of moving pictures, why didn't the hospital provide a moving picture for women having babies? And music! Surely things should be made as interesting as possible for women who are perpetuating the race. It was comforting to think of peasant women who take lunch hours to have their children in, and then put the kids under the haystack and go on working in the fields. Hellish civilization!

I had nothing at home to put the baby in, I thought suddenly. Except a bureau drawer. Carol said she would have a clothes basket. But I adore cradles. Too bad I had been unable to find one. A long time ago I saw an adorable one on the east side in an old second-hand shop. They wanted thirty dollars for it and I didn't have the thirty dollars, and besides, how did I know then

(Cont'd on p. 14)

I was going to have a baby? Still I wanted to buy it. If Sarah Bernhardt could carry a coffin around the country with her there is no reason why I couldn't carry a cradle around with me. It was a bright pink one—not painted pink, because I examined it carefully. Some kind of pink wood.

The pain penetrating my thoughts made me sick to my stomach. Sick at your stomach, or sick to your stomach? I always used to say “sick to your stomach” but William declares it is “sick at your stomach.” Both sound very funny to me. But I'd say whatever William wanted me to. What difference did it make? But I have done so many things he wanted me to, I am tired of it. Doing without milk in my coffee, for instance, because he insists that milk spoils the taste of coffee. And using the same kind of tooth paste. Funny thing, being so intimate with a man that you feel you must use the same kind of tooth paste he does. To wake up and see his head on your pillow every morning. An awful thing to get used to anything. I mustn't get used to that baby. I don't see how I can.

Lightning! It shoots through your back, down your stomach, through your legs and out at the end of your toes. Sometimes it takes longer to get out than others. You have to push it out then. I am not afraid of lightning now, but I used to be. I used to get up in bed and pray every time there was a thunder storm. I was afraid to get up, but prayers didn't do any good unless you said them on your knees.

Hours passed. I thought it must be about four o'clock and found that it was two. Every five minutes the pains came and in between I slept. As each pain began I groaned and cursed, “How long will this one last?” and then when it had swept over with the beautiful rhythm of the sea, I felt with satisfaction “it could be worse,” and clutched at sleep again frantically.

Every now and then my large-hipped nurse came in to see how I was getting along. She was a sociable creature, though not so to me, and brought with her a flip, young doctor and three other nurses to joke and laugh about hospital affairs. They disposed themselves on the other two beds but my nurse sat on the foot of mine, pulling the entire bed askew with her weight. This spoiled my sleeping during the five minute intervals, and, mindful of my grievance against her and the razor, I took advantage of the beginning of the next pain to kick

her soundly in the behind. She got up with a jerk and obligingly took a seat on the next bed.

And so the night wore on. When I became bored and impatient with the steady restlessness of those waves of pain, I thought of all the other and more futile kinds of pain I would rather not have. Toothaches, earaches, and broken arms. I had had them all. And this is a much more satisfactory and accomplishing pain, I comforted myself.

And I thought, too, how much had been written about child birth — no novel, it seems, is complete without at least one birth scene. I counted over the ones I had read that winter — Upton Sinclair's in *The Miracle of Love*, Tolstoi's in *Anna Karenina*, Arnim's in *The Pastor's Wife*, Galsworthy's in *Beyond*, O'Neill's in *The Last Man*, Bennett's in *The Old Wives' Tale* and so on.

All but one of these descriptions had been written by men, and, with the antagonism natural toward men at such a time, I resented their presumption.

“What do they know about it, the idiots,” I thought. And it gave me pleasure to imagine one of them in the throes of childbirth. How they would groan and holler and rebel. And wouldn't they make everybody else miserable around them. And here I was, conducting a neat and tidy job, begun in a most businesslike manner, on the minute. But when would it end?



While I dozed and wondered and struggled, the last scene of my little drama began, much to the relief of the doctors and nurses, who were becoming impatient now that it was almost time for them to go off duty. The smirk of complacency was wiped from me. Where before there had been waves, there were now tidal waves. Earthquake and fire swept my body. My spirit was a battleground on which thousands were butchered in a most horrible manner. Through the rush and roar of the cataclysm which was all about me I heard the murmur of the doctor and the answered murmur of the nurse at my head.

In a white blaze of thankfulness I knew that ether was forthcoming. I breathed deeply for it, mouth open and gasping like that of a baby starving for its mother's breast. Never have I known such frantic imperious desire for anything. And then the mask descended on my face and I gave myself to it, hurling myself into oblivion as quickly as possible. As I fell, fell, fell, very rhythmically, to the accompaniment of tom toms, I heard, faint about the clamor in my ears, a peculiar squawk. I smiled as I floated dreamily and luxuriously on a sea without waves. I had handed in my white ticket and the next thing I would see would be the baby they would give me in exchange. It was the first time I had thought of the child in a long, long time.

Tamara Teresa's nose is twisted slightly to one side. She sleeps with the placidity of a Mona Lisa, so that you cannot see the amazing blue of her eyes which are strangely blank and occasionally, ludicrously crossed. What little hair she has is auburn and her eyebrows are golden. Her complexion is a rich tan. Her ten fingers and toes are of satisfactory length and slenderness and I reflect that she will be a dancer when she grows up, which future will relieve her of the necessity for learning reading, writing and arithmetic.

Her long, upper lip, which resembles that of an Irish policeman, may interfere with her beauty, but with such posy hands as she has already, nothing will interfere with her grace.

Just now I must say she is a lazy little hog, mouthing around my nice full breast and too lazy to tug for food. What do you want, little bird? That it should run into your mouth, I suppose. But no, you must work for your provender already.



Dorothy with her sister Della and Tamar.

She is only four days old but already she has the bad habit of feeling bright and desirous of play at four o'clock in the morning. Pretending that I am a bone and she is a puppy dog, she worries at me fussily, tossing her head and grunting. Of course, some mothers will tell you this is because she has air on her stomach and that I should hold her upright until a loud gulp indicates that she is ready to begin feeding again. But though I hold her up as required, I still think the child's play instinct is highly developed.

Other times she will pause a long time, her mouth relaxed, then looking at me slyly, trying to tickle me with her tiny, red tongue. Occasionally she pretends to lose me and with a loud wail of protest grabs hold once more to start feeding furiously. It is fun to see her little jaw working and the hollow that appears in her baby throat as she swallows.

Sitting up in bed, I glance alternately at my beautiful flat stomach and out the window at tug boats and barges and the wide path of the early morning sun on the East River. Whistles are blowing cheerily, and there are some men singing on the wharf below. The restless water is colored lavender and gold and the enchanting sky is a sentimental blue and pink. And gulls wheeling, warm grey and white against the magic of the water and the sky. Sparrows chirp on the windowsill, the baby sputters as she gets too big a mouthful, and pauses, then, a moment to look around her with satisfaction. Everybody is complacent, everybody is satisfied and everybody is happy.



by Carmina Chapp

(Carmina Chapp is Associate Director of Online Theology Programs for Saint Joseph's College. She lives on the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker Farm, started with her husband, in Harveys Lake, PA.)

I never met Dorothy Day in person, so it seems strange to share a personal reflection on my relationship with her. I only learned of her nine years after her death and have only encountered her in her writings. Yet, she and I have formed a bond of Christian sisterhood that I can honestly say I have only shared with the likes of Catherine of Siena and Therese of Lisieux.

I came alive in my faith as a college student at the University of Notre Dame in the late eighties. I am definitely a product of the '80s — a John Paul II, Generation X Catholic. A study abroad program in Rome caused my experience of “church” to explode — I came to realize that my suburban New Jersey parish and Catholic school were not exactly representative of this Body of Christ to which I belonged. My post-Vatican II American Catholicism seemed superficial in light of the



global reach of the Church, not to mention its ancient Tradition. I returned home wanting a deeper relationship with Jesus, wanting to live His Gospel more radically than I had before.

Upon my return to campus, I took a course in Catholic Social Teaching. It was there that I was assigned *The Long Loneliness*. And there she was. A lay woman living the Gospel radically. In the United States. In the turbulent 20th century. A saint for MY times.

I would not have appreciated *The Long Loneliness* had I not had my own personal experience of the Risen Jesus. It was Dorothy's constant return to the source — to Jesus Christ, especially in the sacraments — for the direction of her work that formed the bond between us. I had returned from Rome wanting to do whatever God wanted me to do. I had experienced an Ignatian indifference, not caring what God's will was for me, but only that I discerned it well. This discernment included repentance for my sins and a more rigorous prayer life, including daily Mass and regular confession. I related to Dorothy's coming alive in her faith and desperately desiring to do something for God.

It would take twenty-five years for God to lead me into The Catholic Worker Movement proper. But Dorothy Day was with me all the way. My vocation was to education and formation, teaching theology at Catholic colleges, and even a seminary for a while. I would have my students read *The Long Loneliness*, hoping they would appreciate her as much as I did.

I found that my favorite writings of Dorothy were from her time living on Tamar's farm in West Virginia. Over the years, I grew more and more conscious of the influence of Peter Maurin on Dorothy's life, particularly her Catholic formation. Not surprisingly, when I finally did become a Catholic Worker, it was as a farmer. I was drawn to going back to the land and to building a new society within the shell of the old. Today, my husband and I run the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker Farm in northeastern Pennsylvania, where we provide organic produce and hand-made wool products to those in need. But greater than the products we give to the poor is the sense of witness to the “new society” of Peter Maurin. We are striving to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through a simplicity of life and the performance of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It amazes us how many people want to come to the farm just to see what we are doing.

Following Dorothy's Benedictine spirituality, daily life on the farm is a rhythm of prayer and work that respects the dignity of the human person and God's creation. Sr. Donald Corcoran, OSB, who lived with Dorothy while studying at Fordham, is assisting us in the process of

becoming Oblates of St. Benedict through her Transfiguration Monastery in Windsor, New York.

Having never met Dorothy Day in person, I may have no business offering an opinion about whether or not the woman should be canonized a saint in the Catholic Church. Yet I will attempt to do so, as she has had an immeasurable influence on my life, particularly as model of a faithful Catholic woman in the United States of America in the twentieth century.

There are two reasons why I would like to see Dorothy Day canonized. The first addresses the polarization of the Catholic “right” and the Catholic “left”. In the past twenty-five years, I have watch the gap between traditional Catholics and liberal Catholics grow ever wider. I believe Dorothy represents what is right and good about both. She transcends the polarity, encourages the good of each side, and challenges the not-so-good. In her quintessential Catholic way, she embraces the both-and, as opposed to the dualistic either-or. Thus, a woman who attended a Latin Mass every day (prior to Vatican II, of course) was an ardent promoter of social justice.

We cannot build up the idea of the apostolate of the laity without the foundation of the liturgy.

-Dorothy Day, “Liturgy and Sociology”, *The Catholic Worker*, January 1936

Dorothy understood that meeting Christ in the liturgy is essential for performing the works of mercy. Her ardent prayer life, including her devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist as a daily communicant, her love of the saints, and her fidelity to the Liturgy of the Hours as an Oblate of St. Benedict, fueled her work with the poor and her desire for justice. When she challenged the hierarchical church, she was challenging it to be more faithful to the liturgy by being more radically faithful to its implications. When one worships and receives the Body of Christ, one has an obligation to care for all God’s children and for creation. She did not challenge the Church to change her teachings, but rather to live up to them. She saw the potential of an organized Church to truly change the world in a way that not even organized labor could. (I will not presume what Dorothy would say about the liturgical reform of Vatican II, but it is well known that she took to heart the work of Fr. Virgil Michel, OSB.) My point is

simply that in order to sustain her work at the Catholic Worker, she needed to worship well. Likewise, because she worshipped well, she was moved to do the work she did. Liturgy was the *source* and *summit* of her Christian life.

The second reason addresses the inculturation of the American church. Founded by Protestants with a deistic worldview contrary to the biblical-sacramental worldview of the Church (and of Dorothy), the American project poses a challenge to Catholics of how to be a “good Catholic” and a “good American”. Dorothy taught me that it is OK to put my Catholic faith before my American citizenship. The fact that she never voted, even though she had marched and gone to jail for the privilege, tells me that the only true authority in her life was God, and that her work would be the same no matter who was in the White House. In this way she was an anarchist – not so that she could do whatever she wanted, but so she would do whatever God wanted her to do, regardless of the situation or consequences. She did not depend on the state to do for her brothers and sisters what she knew was her responsibility as a Christian. And she was willing to be a martyr for it. In this way, she was truly free.

I hope that Dorothy Day is canonized a saint of the Catholic Church. We pray for it every day on the farm after Morning Prayer. Dorothy was a faithful daughter of the Church, and an inspiration to this Catholic woman in the United States of America in the twenty-first century, as I strive to be a faithful daughter myself.



- Rita Corbin

determination that she would have her child baptized, "come what may."

As a dedicated anarchist, Forster would not be married by either church or state. And so to become a Catholic, Dorothy recognized, would mean separating from the man she loved. "It got to the point where it was the simple question of whether I chose God or man." Ultimately, painfully, she chose God. In December 1927 she forced Forster to leave the house. That month she was received into the church.

So goes the familiar story recounted in her memoir. But it is not the whole story. In editing Day's personal letters, *All the Way to Heaven*, I was astonished to read an extraordinary collection of letters to Forster dating from 1925, soon after their first meeting, until December 1932, the eve of her new life in the Catholic Worker.

The early letters certainly reflect the passionate love described in *The Long Loneliness*. In her first letter she writes: "I miss you so much. I was very cold last night. Not because there wasn't enough covers but because I didn't have you." In the next, "I think of you much and dream of you every night and if my dreams could affect you over long distance, I am sure they would keep you awake." Separated for some weeks, she writes Forster: "My desire for you is a painful rather than pleasurable emotion. It is a ravishing hunger which makes me want you more than anything in the world and makes me feel as though I could barely exist until I saw you again...I have never wanted you as much as I have ever since I left, from the first week on, although I've thought before that my desires were almost too strong to be borne."

The letters skip over the time of Tamar's birth and Dorothy's conversion, but after her parting from Forster they resume with poignant intensity. Despite the implication in Dorothy's memoir that her conversion had marked an end, once and for all, to their relationship, this was far from the case. In fact, the letters continue for another five years, as Dorothy pleaded, cajoled and prayed that Forster would give up his stubbornness and consent to marry her.

In vain, she assured him that he would be "involving [himself] in nothing" if he married her. "Religion would be obtruded on you in no way except that you would have to see me go to church once a week, and five times a year on various saints' days. I would have nothing around the house to jar upon you—no pictures and books. I am really not obsessed as you think I am."



At times she could not hide her frustration: "Do I have to be condemned to celibacy all my days, just because of your pig-headedness? Damn it, do I have to remind you that Tamar needs a father?" Her tone fluctuated between tenderness and bitter reproach: "I am not restrained when I am lying in your arms, am I? You know I am not a promiscuous creature in my love.... But it is all so damned hopeless that I do hope I fall in love again and marry since there seems to be no possibility for a happy outcome to our love for each other."

By the fall of 1932 Dorothy was living in New York. In December she traveled to Washington, D.C., to cover the Hunger March of the Unemployed. There on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, she offered a prayer that God would show her some way to combine her Catholic faith and her commitment to social justice. Immediately afterward she would meet Peter Maurin, the French peasant philosopher who would inspire her to launch the Catholic Worker and whose ideas would dominate the rest of her life. Whether there was any relation between the opening of this new door and the decision finally to close the door on her hope of marrying Forster, Dorothy's letter to him of Dec. 10 would be her last for many years.

After describing her strong commitment to the prohibition of sex outside of marriage, she writes: "The ache in my heart is intolerable at times, and sometimes for days I can feel your lips upon me, waking and sleeping. It is because I love you so much that I want you to marry me." Nevertheless, she concluded: "It all is hopeless of course, tho [*sic*] it has often seemed to me a simple thing. Imaginatively I can understand your hatred and rebellion against my beliefs and I can't blame

(Cont'd from p. 18)

you. I have really given up hope now, so I won't try to persuade you anymore."

But even this did not mark the end of their relationship. Over the years they remained connected through Tamar. There would be friendly notes, the exchange of gifts and visits in the hospital. In Dorothy's final years Forster took to calling every day. He was present at her funeral in 1980, and later at a memorial Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

So what, in the end, do these newly published letters reveal? They certainly confirm the deep, passionate love described in Dorothy's memoir, thus underscoring the incredible sacrifice she endured for the sake of her faith. That sacrifice lay at the heart of her vocation; it was the foundation for a lifetime of courage, perseverance and dedication. It marked her deep sense of the heroic demands of faith. But in no sense did it represent a conflict in her mind between "merely" human love and "higher" religious aspirations. "I could not see that love between man and woman was incompatible with love of God," she wrote. And if she had had her way, she would have

embraced a happy family life with Forster and the many children she dreamed of.

Although, as Dorothy reported, some of her radical friends insinuated that her turn to God was because she was "tired of sex, satiated, disillusioned," her true feelings were quite different. "It was because through a whole love, both physical and spiritual, I came to know God."

If Dorothy Day is one day canonized, these letters will provide a fairly unusual resource. They serve to remind us, if that were necessary, that saints are fully human—perhaps, as Thomas Merton put it in *Life and Holiness*, more fully human: "This implies a greater capacity for concern, for suffering, for understanding, for sympathy, and also for humor, for joy, for appreciation for the good and beautiful things of life."

Dorothy considered her love for Forster to be one of the primary encounters with grace in her life, one for which she never ceased to rejoice. That insight and that witness are among her many gifts.

EDITOR'S NOTE: True Stories

After this special joint issue, *In Our Time* will return to its original (shorter) length and be published quarterly. A close to home story — not fictionalized! — accounts for this issue being made into a double one. Our normal winter issue was already underway when my mother, Eleanor Zablotny, 106 years old young, suffered a stroke the week before Christmas and died, blessedly here at home, a biblical forty days later. All has made me think more about the "communion of saints" for surely, as the loving and faith-filled woman my mother was, she has joined their ranks. Some of you kindly imaged a picture I've taken great comfort in: the embrace of Dorothy and Eleanor, the would be formal saint with this anonymous one. I know they would recognize each other!

So...that's true story one. True story two is a story about interdependence. Something Dorothy knew much about and Eleanor struggled at times to understand. Like on the day, early one morning this past fall. I was helping her get dressed, only helping because she did most everything herself. But shoes required assistance. I always knelt down on the floor to adjust them properly. Sitting on her bed's edge, looking down at me, she asked in a totally out of character, challenging tone of voice, "Why do you do this?" I decided to skip over the obvious answer — surely she knows, I thought, vaguely annoyed that I had to protest my love. Gently, instead, I teased her.

"Mom, it's all your fault — you brought me up Catholic."

A long pause. I could hear her thinking. "No, that can't be right. Catholics don't do things like this."

"Mom, of course, they do. And Catholic Workers do things like this all the time!"

And then we both just started to laugh. Hard. Our "funny bone" (her term) struck by the Gospel's seemingly absurd call: to love as we are loved.

Deo gratias! And thanks to you, dear readers, for your patience and understanding.

In Our Time

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www.dorothydayguild.org

DOROTHY DAY GUILD MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Just clip out and mail to the Guild address above. You may also submit online at www.dorothydayguild.org)

☐ I would like to become a new member.

☐ I would like to renew my membership.

Name _____

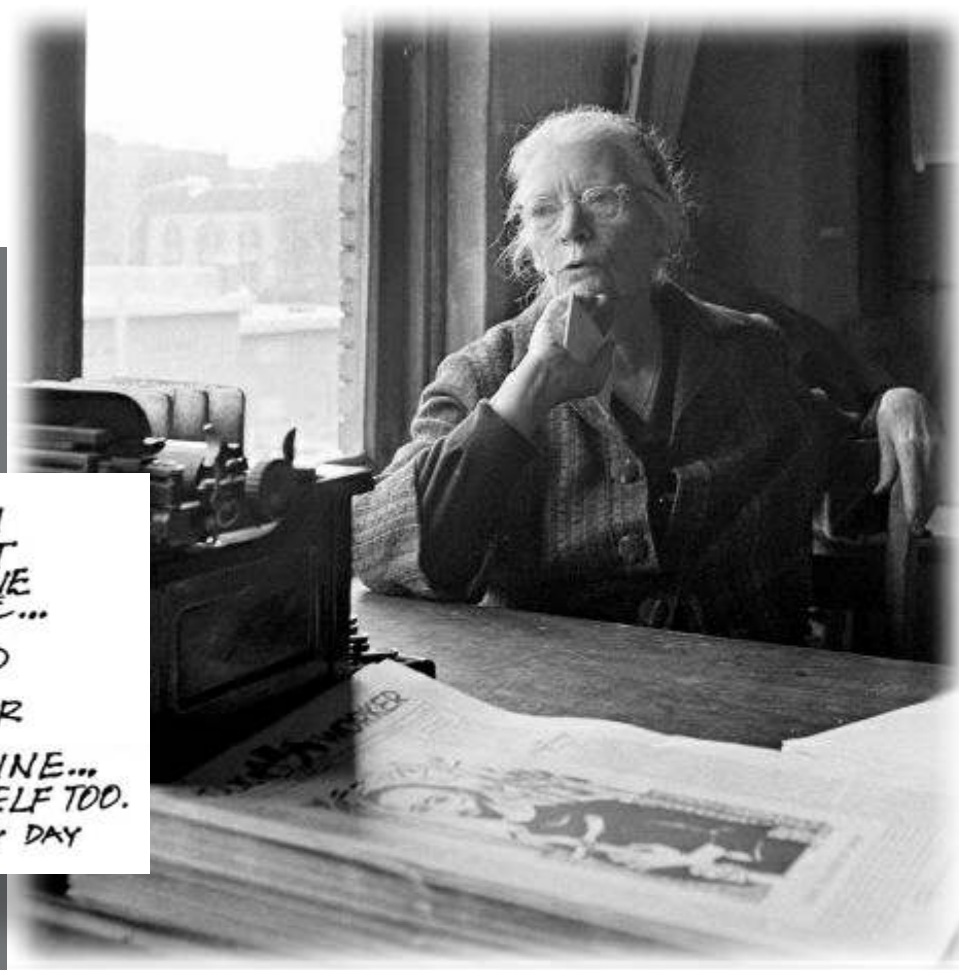
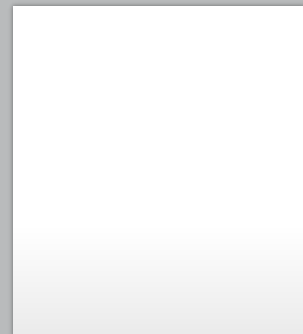
Address _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

\$ _____ Annual Offering: (suggested offering: student, \$15; individual, \$25; family: \$40; organization, \$100)

Circle other ways you might like to help: serving as a Guild representative; volunteering in office; arranging educational events; making a donation of \$ _____ (over and above Guild membership dues).

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New York, NY 10022
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IF WE COULD ONLY LEARN
THAT THE ONLY IMPORTANT
THING IS LOVE, AND THAT WE
WILL BE JUDGED ON LOVE...
TO KEEP ON LOVING, AND
SHOWING THAT LOVE, AND
EXPRESSING THAT LOVE
OVER AND OVER, WHETHER
WE FEEL IT OR NOT.
IT IS A HARD, HARD DOCTRINE...
I AM PREACHING TO MYSELF TOO.
DOROTHY DAY