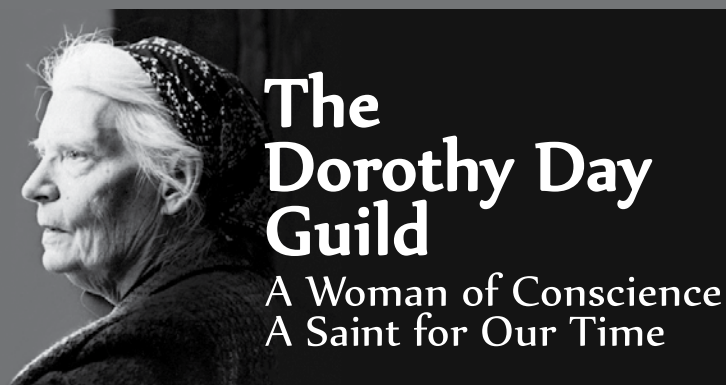


IN OUR TIME

Newsletter of the Dorothy Day Guild
Volume 3, Issue 2 Fall 2017



The Dorothy Day Guild

A Woman of Conscience
A Saint for Our Time

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the Guild!

It must have been fall that inspired the Psalmist to liken the just man to “a tree planted beside streams of water that bears its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.” This fall marks the second anniversary of Pope Francis’s historic talk from the rostrum of the U.S. Congress where he transfixed Americans with his passionate plea that we embrace our ideals and transcend division. Citing the inspiration of Lincoln, Martin Luther King and two lesser known people (then!), Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day, he held out Dorothy to us for her “passion for justice.”

This November we mark the anniversaries of both Dorothy Day’s birth and death. On the occasion of her 75th birthday in 1972, the poet W.H. Auden famously wished her “happy birthday” in a long article in the *New York Review of Books*. Admiringly, he concluded that Dorothy and the Catholic Worker, in their holy pursuit of justice, never succumbed to the heresy of Manichaeism, a temptation of many groups trying to live a Christian life without compromise, going back to the late Roman Empire.

Part of Day’s saintliness for our time lies, we believe, in her lack of recognition of “sides,” whatever their shade or color. She saw only “the large and generous picture of the new social order wherein justice dwelleth....the new social order as it could be and would be if all men loved God and loved their brothers because they are all sons of God!”

Dorothy hungered for communion. In the ancient Church doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ—that in God we are all connected, giving and receiving unexpected and undeserved acts of grace—she found a fullness of expression. It animated her life’s work and that of the Catholic Worker. Since all persons are members or *potential members*, as she was fond of saying, she was not about to slam the door on anyone. All was grace, and she trusted in its workings, any time, any place.

Perhaps saints can be viewed as a unique form of grace. Certainly they were for Dorothy. We continue to pray and work (echoing St. Benedict, one of her favorites) that we will be graced by her own canonization. We continue to progress on what is a long road, but one whose end is increasingly in sight. (See “Dispatches!” on p. 5). “By little and by little,” she always encouraged us!

We rely on and remain deeply grateful for your faithful support, for your companionship “on the way.” **(To renew, if it’s time, your annual Guild membership and/or invite new members among your family, friends, co-workers, people in the pew and out, please see the membership form on p. 11; members receive hard copies of this newsletter).**

Saints underscore that every age must relearn the Gospel. Rife with fear and conflict, our age is no different. Dorothy Day’s witness—a bold witness to the universality of the Christian message—humbles us with all we may have forgotten. ■

**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.*

THERE IS ANOTHER TEMPTATION
WHICH WE MUST ESPECIALLY
GUARD AGAINST: THE SIMPLISTIC
REDUCTIONISM WHICH SEES
ONLY GOOD OR EVIL; OR, IF YOU
WILL, THE RIGHTEOUS AND SINNERS.
THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD,
WITH ITS OPEN WOUNDS WHICH
AFFECT SO MANY OF OUR
BROTHERS AND SISTERS, DEMANDS
THAT WE CONFRONT EVERY
FORM OF POLARIZATION...
POPE FRANCIS

BUT NOW YOU MUST PUT THEM
ALL AWAY: ANGER, FURY, MALICE,
SLANDER... SINCE YOU HAVE
TAKEN OFF THE OLD SELF WITH
ITS PRACTICES and HAVE PUT ON
THE NEW SELF... IN THE IMAGE
OF ITS NEW CREATOR. HERE
THERE IS NOT GREEK and JEW...
SLAVE, FREE; BUT CHRIST IS ALL
AND IN ALL. COLLOSSIANS 3:8-11

GOOD TALK

with Lance Richey

(Lance Richey is the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Professor of Theology at the University of St. Francis, Fort Wayne, IN. He planned and convened a major conference at the University in 2015, "Dorothy Day and the Church: Past, Present, and Future," later co-editing a book of its proceedings. Our thanks to him for his generous "good talk" now!)

Pope Francis (and undoubtedly Dorothy Day) would agree with your opening statement in *Dorothy Day and the Church* that "the saints (or at least the best of them) are always our contemporaries." Can you reflect on Dorothy's "contemporariness" for us 21st century Catholic Americans?

Americans have long known that we have racial, ethnic, class, and partisan divides. But the 2016 presidential election has forced all of us to recognize that these gaps may be far larger, more numerous, more dangerous than we thought. We're not just failing to meet each other and know each other. Increasingly, we distrust, dislike, even hate each other—particularly across partisan divides. Dorothy offers a model of passionate engagement that

never allows principles to be replaced by partisanship. Her vision of the human person and of the common good are deeply rooted in her Catholic faith which always informed her political and theological views. As a result, dehumanizing or vilifying those who disagreed with her was never an option, even when confronted with great social and personal evils. One of her favorite saints, John of the Cross, had said, "Where there is no love, put love, and you will find love." She lived this out. I cannot think of anything our contemporary society needs more than this genuine, Christ-like love, without which dialogue and common effort are impossible.

In much the same way, the Church (especially in America) has experienced serious divides over the last fifty years—in the process, mimicking the debased political culture Dorothy so deeply deplored. A saint like Dorothy takes two hands to grasp, and doing so requires us to let go of the political and social labels that most of us (myself included, most of all) carry around all day slapping on those who please or displease us along the way.

You've evocatively suggested that Dorothy Day, "like any saint, belongs to all people of good faith—and is hostage to none."

Because the depth and breadth of her vision—a society built on Christian

Dorothy responded to an invitation from the United States Catholic Bishops to attend a meeting in anticipation of the nation's bicentennial. "First let me thank you for asking me to speak or "testify" or make suggestions at one of the Bishops' meetings that are being held. I am very honored....One of our young intellectual friends went to interview Lewis Mumford, a truly great man, and asked him what message he would give the American people during the Bicentennial. He answered one word: "Repent." How can anyone add to that?"

In their 1986 Pastoral Letter, *Economic Justice for All*, the U.S. Bishops unequivocally stated that "No one may claim the name Christian and be comfortable in the face of hunger, homelessness, insecurity, and injustice found in this country and the world." The same body, in November 2012, unanimously upheld Day's canonization in a voice vote requested by Timothy Cardinal Dolan.

love rather than on material or political power—is perennial, one need not be a Catholic or a Christian to admire it and want to work toward it. When Dorothy is remembered in popular culture, she is probably destined to become a mythic figure like Thoreau, Martin Luther King Jr., and Gandhi, all of whom she admired and was influenced by.

That said, her instruments for building that peaceable community were distinctively Catholic: a notion of the common good rooted in natural-law theory, a sacramental understanding of community which was an extension of her Eucharistic spirituality, and an explicitly Christ-like willingness to endure suffering nonviolently in witness to her beliefs. To lose sight of these is to lose sight of who Dorothy was.

I want to resist stripping Dorothy of her Catholic particularity. Without her faith, without her rock-solid belief in the power of the gospel to transform the world, she is at best a starry-eyed dreamer and at worst a fool. With it, she is, quite simply, a saint.

Dorothy often referred to the “synthesis” she was seeking, the “correlation between the material and the spiritual.” And she



found its expression in the daily practice of the works of mercy.

While in her later years Dorothy was afraid of being made a “plaster saint” (she famously said, or perhaps said, “Don’t call me saint. Don’t dismiss me that easily.”), I fear she has become one for many Catholics across the theological spectrum. Here was a woman who could spend the day in jail protesting war, racial segregation, or injustice to farm workers, and her evenings bemoaning (at least in her diaries and to close friends) the sexual immorality among some of the young

people who flocked to these causes—without any sense of tension or disconnect between what were for her complementary critiques.

Like every saint, Dorothy grasped the gospel as a whole, and let it inform every area of her (admittedly imperfect) life. The works of mercy were for her the distillation

of the gospel message, stripped of all compromises and illusions. Inevitably, that made hers a life of suffering and sacrifice, but also one infused with joy and constantly aware of the divine beauty that hides under our everyday human ugliness, waiting to be revealed by love.

Another vital synthesis she found was between poverty and pacifism inspired, in part, by one of her “saint contemporaries,” Francis of Assisi.

What was for Dorothy the Catholic Worker *experiment*—and that is what it was, an experiment in radical gospel living—was perhaps too quickly understood as a *movement*, as if it were an organized and easily categorizable group of people seeking specific social and political ends. But that understanding tames and domesticates the gospel, allowing us to embrace or dismiss it on our own limited and selfish terms, rather than to be challenged by its power for both personal and social transformation.

St. Francis is an interesting parallel here. If you study the historical sources, you find that he initially established an inchoate “brotherhood” or “fraternity” of followers who lived and worked together in fidelity to the gospel. However, once the movement got large enough and powerful enough, it was fitted into the category of a “religious order,” like the Benedictines, with a clear and canonically approved leadership structure, legal authority, etc. (things Francis was horrified by). I wonder whether we have not done something similar to the Catholic Worker experiment, intellectually if not ecclesially, consigning it to a predictable spot within the nation’s political spectrum. But Dorothy always transcended any glib categorization of “left” or “right.”



The Catholic Worker often cited St. Francis as a model of fidelity to the gospel of peace and poverty.

(Cont'd on p. 4)

(Cont'd from p. 3)

Dorothy wrote that “If an outsider who comes to visit us doesn’t pay attention to our prayer and what that means, then he’ll miss the whole point.”

Even from the beginning of the Catholic Worker Dorothy writes of the times there were a handful of workers praying in the evenings while the guests and many other volunteers went about their business, apparently missing the point in the midst of it all. But we need to be careful to remember that the point was not just the prayer, but precisely the prayer taking place there among the human wreckage and suffering, filling it with meaning and those who prayed with strength to continue. The inseparable connection between prayer and the works of mercy is the point she was making, I think.

Leon Bloy’s famous aphorism—“The only great tragedy in life is not to become a saint.”—was a favorite of Dorothy’s. Can you shed a little light on her notion of holiness and its practical achievability.



Dorothy criss-crossed the country by Greyhound bus, feeling it her duty to go wherever she was asked. In Seattle in 1940, at the request of the Bishop, she gave several talks, here curiously seated with the flag draped behind her. Often she’d say, “God meant for things to be much easier than we have made them.”

Dorothy was very introspective (though not an introvert) and carefully reflected on her own shortcomings and her slow progress toward sanctity. In one place she observes that she had learned over the years that rather than making a huge and dramatic leap into another state of life, God usually calls us to make progress little by little in

loving and caring for those He puts before us. That’s really the challenge, isn’t it?—not just to love greatly but to love consistently. Dorothy was no romantic but rather a hard-nosed and clear-eyed follower of Jesus who embraced that daily calling of “love in action,” which Dostoevsky called “a harsh and dreadful love.”

I would return here to the danger of making Dorothy a plaster saint. She was deeply flawed—as are we all—and her following of the gospel did not always make life easy on those around, as her husband and daughter and grandchildren knew well. A wonderful friar once told me the old saying, “To live with the saints in heaven is all glory, but to live with them on earth...well, that’s another story.” Everyone who knew Dorothy understood this, I expect. Dorothy was a human being. The proof of her holiness is that, despite her shortcomings, people of goodwill found her irresistibly charismatic. In other words, those who sought goodness sought her because she had it. That’s what a saint does, that’s what a saint is.

(Cont'd on p. 11)



The Catholic Worker

VOL. 1. No. 7

DECEMBER 15, 1933



Price 1 Cent

Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker advocated for economic and racial justice. Day was committed to bringing attention to the plight of black Americans as a group. She worked to ensure that The Catholic Worker newspaper featured both black and white voices, shedding light on lynchings and the lives of sharecroppers, bringing readers’ attention to the “hatred, torture, and murder” against blacks that went largely unreported in the press. (The paper’s initial masthead boasted images of two workers, both white; it was changed after only the first seven issues to a white and a black worker, pictured above).

Dorothy was deeply committed to Dr. Martin Luther King’s civil rights campaigns, the paper brimming with articles in support of his work. Her own work aroused the ire of the KKK. At Easter time in April of 1957, she travelled to Koinonia Farm, an intentional, integrated, agricultural community in Americus, Georgia, to show her solidarity with the “fear and suffering” felt by the community there that was being intimidated, shot at, and boycotted. She insisted on sharing the round-the-clock sentry watch. Three bullets fired from a passing car missed causing her serious injury or death. **D**



VOX POP

“The people”—historically, always the first to recognize someone’s holiness—continue to sign the Guild petition (available on back cover of this newsletter or at www.dorothydayguild.org), asking that Dorothy Day be named a saint:

Please name Dorothy Day a saint. She teaches us so much.

Jane Brenny, Duluth, MN

Yes, Dorothy Day is a saint, I believe. She imitated Jesus very well. She, saw, reached out to, invited, and served God’s poor.

**Margaret Fitzgibbon, S.C.
Trenton, NJ**

Her fidelity and action are great reasons for her canonization.

**Mary Ehling, I.H.M.
East Harlem, NY**

She lived out the true calling of what Jesus Christ wanted us to do.

**Samantha Gafford
Hermitage, TN**

She has inspired me in so many ways to be aware of the poor.

**Mary Ann O’Mara
Spokane, WA**

Dorothy Day is real. A real saint!

**Patricia Q. Fitzgerald
Glenview, IL**

DISPATCHES!

Under the supervision of the Cause’s new Roman postulator, Dr. Waldery Hilgeman, a staff visit was made over the summer to the Guild’s office. The immense amount of “evidence” gathered to date was positively reviewed.

Focus now is on the gathering of Dorothy’s unpublished writings, including handwritten diary pages, letters, and manuscripts. The vast majority of these are held in the Archives of Marquette University in Milwaukee, home to the Dorothy Day Collection. With funds from the Archdiocese of New York, two graduate students have recently been hired to digitize them. The Guild remains deeply thankful for all the support from the Archdiocese and to Timothy Cardinal Dolan and Msgr. Gregory Mustaciuolo in particular.

Concurrently, the theological experts are studying the published writings, with an eye to determining any theological error. Staff is engaged in copying these documents onto European A4 paper (slightly larger than the standard 8.5” x 11” paper here) and in obtaining the requisite librarian and archivist stamps authenticating every page. (It has been said that the expression, “the devil is in the details,” has its roots in the process leading to canonization).



Interviews of a second “cohort” of eyewitnesses will begin in November. A total of 12 interviews are planned. Additional interviews will be conducted with a third (and final) cohort, their number to be determined, with all interviews to be completed within a two year timeframe.



ART EXHIBITION OPENING !

The Sheen Center for Thought and Culture and the Dorothy Day Guild are the proud co-sponsors of a special exhibition, *A NewWorld: Contemporary Art Exploring Dorothy Day’s Vision of Social Justice*. Conceived and curated by sculptor and painter, Anthony Santella (in his “spare” time he also administers the Guild’s social media), the exhibition will open on Saturday, December 16, 2017 in the Sheen Center’s Gallery, 18 Bleecker St., in New York City. One and all are warmly invited to the **opening reception, 5 to 7 pm, December 16**. The exhibition will run through January 12, 2018.

A NewWorld juxtaposes excerpts from Dorothy’s writings with artwork addressing the ideals she devoted her life to: social justice, voluntary poverty, resistance to racial prejudice, nonviolence, Christian anarchism, and agrarian utopianism. The work encompasses photography, painting, printmaking and sculpture. The roster of artists includes some whose work appears in *The Catholic Worker* newspaper, including Guild Advisory Committee member, Geoffrey Gneuchs, as well as homeless artists from

(Cont’d on p. 10)

SAINTLY MATTERS

LONG BEFORE VATICAN II, DOROTHY DAY ACCEPTED as an axiom of faith that all are called to sanctity. The Gospel, she believed, mandated nothing less than “a revolution of the heart” but one that was within everyone’s grasp. Characteristically, she credited Peter Maurin for her understanding. “He loved all,” she said, “saw all others around him as God saw them....He made you feel that you and all men had great and generous hearts with which to love God.”

Sanctity is what defines a saint. And Dorothy, wanting nothing more than to be faithful, strove with great deliberation for holiness. In his engrossing study, *The Meaning of Saints*, theologian Lawrence Cunningham speaks of a saint as being a “charism”—a grace for the benefit of others—helping them find ways of incarnating their values into their own lives.

Cunningham underscores another equally powerful, if sometimes forgotten, value of the saint: as one who points to a better social order or who stands in criticism of the present order. Often we cast an otherworldly glow around saints, placing a halo that rarifies, if not distorts, their true light. Dorothy Day would brook none of this, either in regard to herself by any of us now or to her saintly companions (including St. Catherine of Siena and St. Teresa of Avila who called both religious and civic leaders to account). She, like Peter, understood that the significance of saints lies in their illuminating their times by, as Cunningham puts it, “enfleshing

Christian ideals in concrete historical situations.”

Even in the face of criticism within her own ranks for her pacifist stance during World War II, she dared to venture, “We cannot keep silent.”

“We are working for a new heaven and a new *earth*,” she firmly stated. A world not fractured by poverty, racism, war but one made whole (holy) through the transformative power of love. Guided by the Sermon on the Mount whose direct

applicability Dorothy never doubted, the Catholic Worker combated anti-Semitism in the 1930’s, fought for worker’s rights, protested unjust exploitation, and supported the cause of civil rights. “No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do,” she wrote.

Dorothy saw war as part of the larger picture of injustice and oppression in her own land. Even in the face of criticism within her own ranks for her pacifist stance during World War II, she dared to venture, “We cannot keep silent. We have not kept silence in the face of the monstrous injustice of the class war, or the race war that goes on side by side with this world war.”

Yet she would have objected vigorously to any effort to airbrush her faults and failings or that of the Catholic Worker movement. “We cannot ever be too complacent about our own uncompromising positions because we know that in our own way we, too, make compromises.”

Like most holy people, she often fell short of her ideals. We know this because she herself calls attention to her faults in her journals and diaries—her impatience, her temper, her self-righteousness. “Thinking gloomily of the sins and shortcomings of others, it suddenly came to me to remember my own offenses,

(Cont’d on p. 11)

At Root...

Catholic Worker co-founder, Peter Maurin, saw in Dorothy Day another St. Catherine of Siena, the great 14th century saint known for her contemplation and prayer as well as her involvement in Church and civic affairs. When he first met Dorothy, he quoted St. Catherine, urging her to “be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.” Here are more of St. Catherine’s insights and exhortations.

You are obliged to love your neighbor as yourself, and loving him, you ought to help him spiritually, with prayer, counseling him with words, and assisting him both spiritually and temporally, according to the need in which he may be.

God is closer to us than water is to a fish.

We’ve had enough of exhortations to be silent! Cry out with a hundred thousand tongues. I see that the world is rotten because of silence.

Nothing great is ever achieved without much enduring.

Now how can those who do not know their own sinfulness recognize and correct it in others?

You are awarded not according to your work or your time but according to the measure of your love.

Start being brave about everything.

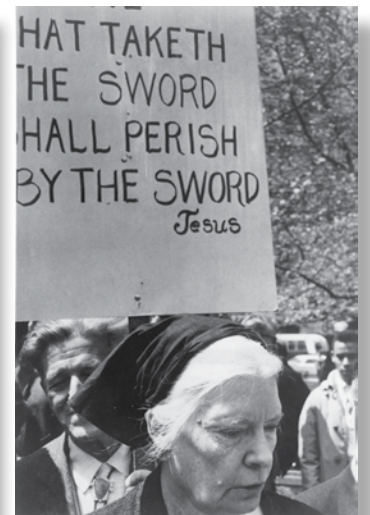


THE WORKS OF MERCY ✠ ✠ FEED THE HUNGRY ✠
CLOTHE THE NAKED ✠ GIVE DRINK TO THE
THIRSTY ✠ VISIT THE IMPRISONED ✠ CARE FOR
THE SICK ✠ BURY THE DEAD ✠ COUNSEL THE
DOUBTFUL ✠ INSTRUCT THE IGNORANT ✠
CORRECT SINNERS ✠ COMFORT THE SORROWFUL
✠ FORGIVE ALL INJURIES ✠ BEAR WRONGS WITH
PATIENCE ✠ PRAY FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD



*“Taking a knee” in protest did not begin with the current players in the National Football League. Robert Ellsberg who edited Day’s journals and diaries observed that Dorothy “loved her country and she loved the Church, and part of that meant knowing when to stand and when to kneel, when to sit still and when to march.” (See **America** magazine, 9/26/17).*

Dorothy foreshadowed Pope Francis’s Lenten message in the year of mercy he proclaimed in 2016. “In the corporal works of mercy we touch the flesh of Christ in our brothers and sisters who need to be fed, clothed, sheltered, visited; in the spiritual works of mercy—counsel, instruction, forgiveness, admonishment and prayer—we touch more directly our own sinfulness. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy must never be separated.”



Dorothy and the Catholic Worker are credited with reviving the ancient practice in the Church of the Works of Mercy. Generally divided into the “corporal” works and the “spiritual” works, part of Day’s genius was to wed the two. For her, caring for victims of injustice also meant protesting injustice; picketing also meant praying. And we are all in need of mercy.



By Anne Klejment

*(An American historian, author, and educator, Anne is currently on the faculty of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN. She has researched and written extensively about Dorothy Day, including an in-depth bibliography, worked on with her mother, Alice Klejment. She is the co-editor of **American Catholic Pacifism**, a winner of the Pax Christi USA book award. We are delighted to learn some of her own history.)*

I grew up an only child in Rochester, New York during the cold war, the civil rights and antiwar movements, and Vatican II. Like seemingly everyone else in our Polish American neighborhood, I attended parochial school and Catholic high school, later even choosing a Catholic college. Since childhood, I've had a passion for history. Perhaps it started with my mom's bedtime stories about our family history—my immigrant great grandparents, she and her siblings growing up in the twenties and thirties. I loved old photographs of the Genesee Valley area. I witnessed everyday injustice, too, although at the time I didn't have the words to express what I was seeing and hearing.

Vivid memories from childhood still arise. The crumbling, overcrowded, and segregated housing intended for African Americans and Puerto Ricans. Veterans, marching down the street long after the war's end. A nun's whispered comment to my parents that "chocolate drops" were moving into the parish, which vigilant observation taught me was a Puerto Rican family. Mom's adamant opposition to the atomic bomb. Our city's urban uprising in 1964.

One of my mom's high school classmates was a founder of the Rochester, New York Catholic Worker, St. Joseph's House. We made donations to St. Joe's but I didn't know what the CW stood for other than that it existed to help the poorest of the poor. So far as I knew, it was another Catholic charity.

As a high school student who hadn't yet encountered Dorothy Day, the nonviolent activism of Martin Luther King, Jr. gave me a more profound understanding of Jesus's radical values. During the last semester of my senior year, 1968, I wrote a paper for my religion class on MLK. That year, I lost my faith in politics as the means to the needed changes in our society. The bloody and futile Vietnam War dragged on, poverty remained visible and relatively untouched by government initiatives, King and Bobby Kennedy were killed, both major parties nominated candidates who failed to represent the kind of change I hoped to see. I was too young to vote anyway!

Dorothy Day's name first registered with me when I was attending graduate school at a state university. Advanced history graduate students were researching topics related to their ethnicity or family history—unionism, Communist party activism, immigrant Jewish ancestry, student unrest at black colleges. I decided to choose a Catholic topic since that was an important part of my identity. It was still embarrassing to admit to my Polish American heritage.

My dissertation analyzed the social thought of Daniel and Philip Berrigan but here Dorothy Day's name kept appearing in my sources. It was time

I learned about her or, more accurately, from her. *From Union Square to Rome* hooked me. She became a Catholic, but didn't lose sight of working for justice in this world. What could a Catholic contribute to justice movements?

I wrote to her, perhaps in 1976 or 1977, but her health was already failing. I had started reading *The Catholic Worker*. Dorothy's writings provide a rich spiritual education—not to speak of an entire liberal arts curriculum in social justice—and fed my hunger for a deeper spiritual life. Once, while in Rochester, a friend from



England and I drove to St. Joe's to experience a Stanley Vishnewsky slide show, while some CW guests passed a bottle under the table and later challenged another speaker's antinuclear views.

My focus started to shift to her. Providentially, Garland, my publisher, was delighted with a proposal for a Dorothy Day and Catholic Worker bibliography and index. One of Forster Batterham's relatives (Forster, her "common-law" husband and father of her daughter) was employed there, and she offered me his address and phone. I was too shy to interview him—and besides—I assumed wrongly, that Day's biographer had spoken with him. My mom, smart, dependable, and meticulous joined me in indexing *Catholic Worker* articles. We completed the book shortly before she became ill in 1986.

Numerous serendipitous occasions convinced me that researching and writing about Dorothy Day was something I was born to do; Catholic Worker historians (Bill Miller, David O'Brien, Tony Novitsky, Mel Piehl, and Frank Sicius) generously helped me get started. One of the most memorable experiences came after Robert Ellsberg published Dorothy's journals. It inspired me to write an article on the spirituality of her pacifism. Normally, I struggle with writing, but that time it felt as though the article wrote itself.

Of course, many times writing hasn't come easily. I struggle for words or for a sense of direction. But that's a gift from her, too. She reminds me that projects get done "by little and by little."

Since I am such an introvert, it's hard for me to write about how Dorothy Day has guided me spiritually for nearly forty years. Early on, her autobiographies taught me that conversion is an unending process, a daily challenge. She always sought to deepen her faith. Growing up as a cradle Catholic in the era of the "Church triumphant," I had absorbed the attitude that there was nothing new to learn about faith or deepening our relationship with God, especially from other religious traditions. She challenged this smugness and was one of the first, for example, to explain that communists showed Christians what our faults were.

Without her guidance, I would have had a tough time remaining an active Catholic—or having any kind of spiritual life. At times, I was overtaken by the sameness of worship,

finding it dry and meaningless. At other times, life's difficulties created doubt. Yet somehow, she always has been able to pull me back.

When I first started reading her works, I experienced a powerful dream. One of my closest friends appeared to be in trouble. The dream showed me my friend's distraught face, as though from a television screen. I woke up. What could I do at 3 am? Was there really a problem? The idea came to me: "you could pray." Exactly those words. And I did. Afterwards, I experienced great peace and went back to sleep. Later I discovered, that, yes, there had been a crisis with potentially tragic consequences. My friend admitted

to regaining strength and balance that night. Dorothy had been in such a place, too. I believe she helped to save my friend's life.

I keep rereading Dorothy's writings. I see something new in them with each reading, like her playful sense of humor in her letters and journals: a reminder too that saints are

real people, just like us.

At mid twentieth century, some Catholics fostered the continuing battle against the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century and the cold war against communism. Instead, Dorothy preferred a positive approach to living as a Catholic Christian. She understood the revolutionary potential of the Sermon on the Mount and its radical inclusivity. The law of love contained the core message of Christianity and she lived it. For her, Catholicism did not simply mean adhering to a list of "don'ts." She recognized that we are all sinners and that the human aspect of the church is imperfect, but that by the grace of God we can try to become better—to practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in our daily lives, wherever we are.

I grew up in that church of "don'ts." Now I try to see how I can respond to situations around me with a concern rooted in the works of mercy. Even an ordinary person, like myself, on an ordinary day, can do this. My students would be appalled if they thought I was "instructing the ignorant," but I try to gently bring my faith into the classroom and in working individually with them. Hospitality is not only a work of mercy but a part of my Polish American heritage: always ready to celebrate with special food and drink, to make others feel welcome. For many

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years, I volunteered as a food preparer at a Loaves and Fishes site, making that great Minnesota meal, tater tot hot dish, with others.

As an unchurched child and as a Catholic adult Dorothy revered the Bible and read it. Before Vatican II, many Catholics avoided reading the Bible. Conventional Catholics thought that Protestants read the Bible and broke away from the Church. Bible reading could lead you astray. In the seventh or eighth grade, we had a New Testament that we used exactly once. During Holy Week we read the Passion, a story that wouldn't confuse us. The Passion is the story of suffering love, but somehow the love angle received little attention. A combination of Dorothy and Vatican II has drawn me to daily prayer with Scripture.

Her spirituality was incredibly rich and not reduced to "pray, pay, and obey." She used her freedom and her openness to connect with God and the saints through the sacraments, devotions, spiritual reading, the liturgy, personal prayer, performing the works of mercy, and nonviolent direct action.

Her lived example helps me to see God in all things.

Her desire to live as an observant Catholic and the sacrifice of her happy domestic life with Forster deeply moves me. Her letters illuminate the magnitude of her sacrifice. I wonder what her life would have been like had she and Forster married. How would she have lived her faith? What kind of community would she have created?


I love the stories of her "picketing" St. Joseph by slipping unpaid bills under his statue and joining with others to pray for speedy help in times of desperation. In times of war, she did not cower before Caesar! She continued to advocate an inclusive nonviolence that eludes so many Christians today.

Perhaps my writing and speaking will lead others to learn how Christians, and especially Catholics, can live simply and nonviolently as best we can. I'm still working on how I live my life....

We live in a world torn apart by injustice, hatred, greed, and war. Dorothy Day reminds me—reminds us—to

take personal responsibility in addressing the needs that surround us.

Supporting the canonization effort is essential. After decades studying Day's life and works, I'm convinced that she is a saint for our times—and for all times. Her spirituality demonstrates how much can be accomplished "by little and by little," just as Therese of Lisieux taught. For her Jesus and the saints were intimate companions and she could speak frankly with them, just as Theresa of Avila did when her mount tossed her into a creek, leading to her remark, "if this is the way You treat your friends, no wonder You have so few!"

Dorothy was an original. A laywoman and convert, she knew and understood the essentials of faith and she put them into practice. Unlike many Catholics of her generation and ours, she found freedom in the Church, and she put that freedom to good use. I never cease to learn from her. She continues, over four decades now, to be a wellspring of inspiration and study, as I strive in my own way to live and share the faith anew. 

(Cont'd from p. 3)


Bolivia and New York City. Some work is overtly political; much addresses the show's themes more obliquely. Yet each artist is driven to communicate a message of hope and warning as urgent in its own way as Day's.

A centerpiece of the exhibit is a wooden shrine, built from driftwood collected on the beach of Staten Island, NYC, where Day had a cabin, demolished in 2000. Artists and the public at large are invited to contribute small artifacts to the shrine, ex voto offerings that speak to their understanding of Day's legacy of faith and activism.

Day's synthesis of deep, dogmatically orthodox faith and radical social action challenges our culture's prevalent, and increasingly problematic, liberal/conservative dichotomy. The varied work on display should provide all viewers with some opportunity for reflection.

Hopefully, the exhibition will "travel" far and wide via the Guild's website (www.dorothydayguild.org). Stay posted!



The Guild wants to extend a heartfelt word of thanks to longtime New York Catholic Worker, Daniel Mauk, for his arduous work in the organizing of a wonderfully creative fundraising initiative: an auction of art, artifacts and memorabilia held this October at Biencasa on Manhattan's Upper West Side. It was the perfect synthesis: fun and fundraising. All items were donated with the entire proceeds going towards the Cause. Thank you, Dan, and to all who helped make it such a successful event. 

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

(Cont'd from p. 4)

just as heinous as those of others.” In an entry, dated April 24, 1961, she quotes philosopher/poet, Charles Peguy, one of many who impacted Catholic Worker thought. “The sinner is at the very heart of Christendom. No one knows more about Christianity than the sinner. No one unless it is the saint. And in principle they are the same man.”


In his historic talk before Congress, Pope Francis cited Dorothy Day among four great Americans who “shaped fundamental values which will endure forever in the spirit of the American people”—whose “tireless works” taught the nation to “strive for justice and the cause of the oppressed.”

He may well have said that this very American woman reminds us of our immense capacity for sanctity and sin. Feeling the depth of their movement in her own soul first, Dorothy Day risked holding up a mirror to herself, and to

us, as individuals and as a nation. She reminds us—as she constantly reminded herself—that we are all responsible, one for the other. And, like all saints, she reminds us that the Gospel is meant to be lived. Here and now. — CZ

(Cont'd from p. 4)

Anything special you'd like to add, Lance?

In terms of her democratic sensibility and egalitarian spirit, Dorothy is perhaps the most “American” saint imaginable. Maybe her gift for us today is as a model for how the Catholic faith should look in a modern world which is quickly abandoning religion. We may yet be called to be prophetic witnesses to Christ on the margins, a still small voice in a noisy and angry world. For such a mission, there is no better patron saint than Dorothy Day. 

EDITOR'S NOTE: “JUST” PRONOUNS?

As we were proofing a final time this fall newsletter, anxious to run off to the printer, we couldn't help but be struck by the pervasiveness of male pronouns, many in the quotes we included of Dorothy's. Perhaps in this issue on Dorothy's vision of inviolable community, they jumped out all the more!

It prompted us to scour guidelines for nonsexist use of language. One counseled, “when referring to quotes, you must determine whether the author meant to include both sexes.” Clearly, Dorothy did. So, feeling on a just mission, we actually started to go through all of her direct quotations, changing “man” to “people” or “human beings,” etc., etc.

But it seemed so awkward to the ear! (Not that sexism isn't a little “awkward” and more than to just the ear.) Stymied, we decided for now to trust that what's meant is what's heard: both male and female. But we genuinely invite your thoughts on appropriate language, moving forward, dear readers...sisters and brothers!

In Our Time

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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

Email Phone

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

Circle other ways you might like to help: serving as Guild representative, office volunteer, arranging educational events.

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PETITION

Ask that Dorothy Day be named a Saint

The life of Dorothy Day (1887-1980) embodies the powerful message of Pope Francis's first encyclical, *Lumen Fidei*—"the light of faith is concretely placed at the service of justice...and peace."

We believe she is a saint for our time.

Please sign this petition to advance her cause not because she needs it, but because we today need her witness and model of holiness.

Mail to:

The Dorothy Day Guild, 1011 First Avenue, Room 787, New York, NY 10022 or submit via email: ddg@archny.org • www.dorothydayguild.org

Thank you!

Name _____

Print above and sign here

E-mail _____

Country _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Comments (optional):

PEOPLE SAY, WHAT IS THE SENSE
OF OUR SMALL EFFORT? THEY CANNOT
SEE THAT WE MUST LAY ONE BRICK
AT A TIME, TAKE ONE STEP AT A
TIMEBUT WE CAN PRAY 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

