

IN OUR TIME

Newsletter of the Dorothy Day Guild
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The Dorothy Day Guild

A Woman of Conscience
A Saint for Our Time

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the Guild!

"For lo, the winter is past," sang Solomon. Almost anyway. It was an ambivalent winter: snow, rain, ice; snow, rain, ice. The footprints of a snowy morning washed away at day's end. The saints, of course, are intended to leave a more lasting footprint. Enough so that we can readily decipher its outline from one generation to the next. Enough to guide and inspire us even while we chart, as we must, our own direction.

Perhaps that's why the Church's Congregation for the Causes of Saints is so precise in its understanding of holiness. The "heroic" practice of virtue. The bringing of gifts urgently needed by a candidate's historic time and place. The mark of sanctity must be clear.

In past newsletters, we've touched on Dorothy Day's unique gifts. A saint for our time indeed! Beginning with this winter issue, we'll explore how Dorothy lived the great "theological" virtues of faith, hope, and charity. It seemed fitting to start with charity, and we are very grateful for Dan Cosacchi's elucidating its meaning in "Good Talk" (please see pg. 2).

Curiously, notwithstanding the specificity of the ecclesial definition of sanctity or the carefully proscribed judicial process observed to prove it, the saints transcend any cookie cutter mold. Dorothy Day, for one, was never a cookie cutter anything. Her old radical friends thought she was too religious; her religious friends at times thought she was too radical, particularly when it came to her pacifism (enjoy Nancy Roberts's wonderful reflection in "Breaking Bread," pg. 8). She paid a huge price for her conversion, but she was not a convert who devalued her previous life. She decried poverty but praised its voluntary embrace. And she was at home in a pew praying as she was on a picket line protesting.

It is love that remains the constant throughout Dorothy Day's life. The measure of it all. Love is the common ground of all the saints. It's what holds their collective footprints in place, beckoning us to follow, building the kingdom where justice, peace and dignity dwell.

In his introduction to *Dorothy Day: Selected Writings*, Robert Ellsberg writes that Dorothy "held the powers of this world, as she held herself, accountable to the word and commandment of God.... She responded to that obligation not only in its personal form of charity but in its most political form as well: challenging, resisting and obstructing the institutional forces which led to poverty and waste of war."

The cause for her canonization continues to accelerate (see "Dispatches!" on pg. 5). We feel the wind at our back! As always, we rely on and remain deeply thankful for all your support.

(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).

Together, we can, we will, we must ensure that the unique footprint of Dorothy Day won't be lost.

**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.*

THE GOSPEL IS NOT MERELY ABOUT
OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. NOR
SHOULD OUR LOVING RESPONSE
TO GOD BE SEEN SIMPLY AS AN
ACCUMULATION OF SMALL PERSONAL
GESTURES TO INDIVIDUALS IN NEED,
A KIND OF "CHARITY A LA CARTE"...
THE GOSPEL IS ABOUT THE KINGDOM
OF GOD. IT IS ABOUT LOVING GOD
WHO REIGNS IN OUR WORLD.

POPE FRANCIS

WHEN HE LOOKED UP HE SAW SOME WEALTHY PEOPLE PUTTING THEIR OFFERINGS INTO THE TREASURY and HE NOTICED A POOR WIDOW PUTTING IN TWO SMALL COINS. HE SAID, "I TELL YOU TRULY, THIS POOR WIDOW PUT IN MORE THAN ALL THE REST; FOR THOSE OTHERS HAVE ALL MADE OFFERINGS FROM THEIR SURPLUS WEALTH, BUT SHE, FROM HER POVERTY, HAS OFFERED HER WHOLE LIVELIHOOD."
LUKE 21: 1-4

GOOD TALK

with Daniel Cosacchi

(Part of the inquiry into the life of a proposed candidate for canonization focuses on the individual's practice of key Christian virtues. We're very happy to be able to talk about charity, that most foundational virtue, with Daniel Cosacchi. Dan is the Canisius Postdoctoral Fellow and Lecturer of religious studies at Fairfield University. He is co-editor of *The Berrigan Letters: Personal Correspondence between Daniel and Philip Berrigan*.)

It seems that "charity" has many connotations. In her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, Dorothy Day recalls her feeling as a young woman that "it was a word to choke over."

The connotation that most people associate with charity would likely be "help." Of course, helping in itself is not a bad thing; it is praiseworthy, so long as it is read as service to others. But, when it is considered reaching down to people who are somehow lower and lesser than ourselves, then it becomes problematic. As Dorothy accurately puts it, "charity" then is a "word to choke over." We choke over that word precisely because nobody wants to be the recipient of *that* type of charity. What would be preferable

would be a form of solidarity that views all human beings as having a dignity that comes directly from God. Such solidarity would hopefully motivate us to give of ourselves in ways that are not patronizing or demeaning. Here, I would even draw a distinction between the charity that we "choke over" and altruism, a generosity that includes a genuine affection for the other, rather than patronizing them. The greatest problem with "patronizing charity" is that it has nothing to do with being in union with the poor. Dorothy was always in union with the poor. In fact, that is what Thomas says about *caritas*; it is about union (*Summa Theologiae*, II.II.23).

In his 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, Benedict XVI writes that charity has been and continues to be "misconstrued and emptied of meaning." Can you shed some light on the word's etymology?

In some ways, what Benedict XVI is saying in the introductory section of *Caritas in Veritate* is very similar to the message Dorothy lived throughout her life. If I might just continue to quote from the passage of the encyclical that you cite, Benedict notes that charity is "easily dismissed as irrelevant for interpreting and giving direction to moral responsibility." I bring up this context only because I believe it helps

In April 1968, the tragic time of Martin Luther King's slaying, Dorothy wrote to her readers in the *Catholic Worker*, "We have not yet loved our neighbor with the kind of love that is a precept to the extent of laying down our life for him.... This is a new precept; it is a new way; it is the new human we are supposed to become. I always comfort myself by saying that Christianity is only two days old (a thousand years are as one day in the sight of God) and so it is only a couple of days that are past and now it is about time we began to take these things literally, to begin tomorrow morning and say, "Now I have begun."

About the same time, attempting to sum up the *Catholic Worker*, she entered in her diary that in the end, "love is the reason for it all."

to respond to your precise question about the etymology of the word in the Christian tradition. Perhaps the most recognizable (due to its common proclamation at weddings) appearance of “*caritas*” from Scripture is in Saint Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, in which he teaches that love is patient, kind, not envious or resentful; and finally, that love never ends (13:4-8). As Scripture scholars tell us constantly, the reason Paul was writing these words is not only because *caritas* is embodied through the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus, but because it is the appropriate way for Christians to act. Presumably Paul wrote this because the Corinthians at that time weren’t fulfilling this expectation.

In medieval times, the greatest expositor of *caritas* was Saint Thomas Aquinas, who described it, along with the other Pauline virtues of faith and hope, as a theological virtue. Therefore, rather than seeing it as “misconstrued and emptied of meaning,” as Benedict cautions, Thomas agrees with Paul that charity is the most perfect of the virtues, even “the mother and root of all virtues” (*Summa Theologiae* I.II.62.4). Just as many of his ecclesial contemporaries were reducing *caritas* to simple almsgiving, Thomas was making it clear that *caritas* has a much deeper meaning: it is a word that means *God’s love for human beings*; and human love for God, others, and self. In the early church, it was clear that the ministry of charity was to be carried out along with the celebration of the sacraments and the proclamation of the Word. But a major shift had taken place in the Middle Ages, such that the term “charity” began to be read as a reason to give alms directly to the church, which frequently resulted in the misuse of funds. Thomas’s teaching was a challenge to that practice and a reminder of the true meaning of *caritas*.



Speaking at anti-Vietnam rally, Union Square, NYC, Nov. 1965

How does charity intersect with Catholic social teaching?

There are a number of ways to answer this question. I am fortunate enough to be teaching a class on Catholic social teaching, and I have been telling my students that Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato si’*, is the single most important document promulgated in the Catholic social-teaching tradition. It is also a wonderful lens through which to respond to your question. In that document, Francis makes it clear, over and over again, that “everything is connected” or “everything is [inter] related.” When he repeats these phrases, he is aiding all of us in understanding that the Catholic tradition is best summed up by the conjunction “and.” Therefore, a hallmark of the Catholic tradition is charity *and* Catholic social teaching. In *Laudato si’*, Francis says, “Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which effects not only relationships between individuals but also ‘macro-relationships,

social, economic and political ones” It should not surprise us that this would be a sentiment with which Dorothy would agree. Francis, as all of your readers will recall, famously named Dorothy as one of his four exemplary Americans during his 2015 Address to Congress. In citing Dorothy, Francis pointed explicitly to her care for the poor, especially through solidarity.

Often people cite that one of Dorothy’s many contributions is her linking of charity with justice.

For Dorothy, it would have been difficult to make a clean distinction between charity and justice, precisely because her work and the mission of the Catholic Worker movement are a direct response to the injustices taking place all around the world, then and now. There would be no need, for example, to take on voluntary poverty if everyone in the world already had what they needed to thrive. How much we love others is equivalent to how much we are willing to give up in order that they don’t suffer injustice.

The relationship between charity and justice in Catholic thought is a long and controversial one. Once again, I think it’s important to affirm the Catholic tradition of “and.” In Catholic thinking it must be charity *and* justice, rather than simply charity *before* justice. This was one of the major critiques made regarding Pope Benedict XVI’s 2005 encyclical *Deus caritas est*. In fact, Benedict himself commented further on justice in a commentary on *Deus caritas est* but ten days after he promulgated the encyclical. Since justice is what is *due* to each and every individual and group of individuals, charity naturally goes beyond justice. But the problem can arise in thinking of love/charity as the end-all, be-all of Christian living. Love and justice

(Cont’d on p. 4)

(Cont'd from p. 3)



Breadline at the Catholic Worker, late 1930s

work *together* in a complementary, not a hierarchical, way.

Dorothy's practice of virtue always seems to extend its (our!)

boundaries. Her practice of charity points unequivocally in the direction of antimilitarism and antimaterialism.

Here, I must return to Pope Francis's mantra that everything is connected. Dorothy believed that all of these social injustices that have befallen people are connected to one another. It is difficult to separate, for example, racism from warfare, and economic injustice from the scourging of the environment. As Dorothy wrote in January 1942, "Our Works of Mercy may take us into the midst of war." That is a most profound statement, because it reminds us that practicing the works of mercy takes us out of ourselves in a way; it opens us up to experiences that we might not have otherwise chosen for ourselves.

Dorothy loved to quote Dostoevsky's famous observation that "love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams." She never sentimentalized its practice.

For Dorothy, as well as for all serious Christians, love cannot be reduced to a Hallmark card that is only about inward emotions. As Saint Ignatius of Loyola put it, "Love ought to manifest itself more in deeds than in words." As we know, "Talk is cheap!" At the same time, love does not have a "one-size-fits-all" quality. As the late Dean Brackley, S.J. observed, "Discernment is necessary because it is not always clear what love calls for" (*The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times*). At all times, it seems, Dorothy discerned

(Cont'd on p. 10)

The Lower East Side of Manhattan was a bustling, teeming magnet for immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries, first the Irish, escaping the potato famine, then the Germans, and finally Eastern Europeans, many of them Jewish, starting in earnest in the 1880's, escaping repression in their homelands. The tenement, as in other parts of New York City, was the dominant form of housing with hundreds of people, in some cases, occupying the same building. Crowding, freezing cold in winter, and stifling heat in summer were the norm.



streets back in 1917, I wanted to go and live among these surroundings...I felt that I would never be freed from this burden of loneliness and sorrow unless I did."

On the eve of WWI, determined to find work as a journalist, Dorothy Day wandered its streets, practically begging a job from the *New York Call*, a Socialist paper almost as broke as she was. For five dollars a month, she rented a tiny hall bedroom in a five-story tenement with a window onto the air shaft and a toilet off the stairwell for the use of two families. There was no electricity or central heating, or hot water. Yet, as she later wrote in her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, "As I walked these

Her room was clean though, and the Orthodox Jewish family she rented it from provided her with a thick down comforter and a plate of food by her bed when she came home late after nights on the paper. They became for her an icon of generosity.

And the Lower East Side became an icon of the dignity of the poor. And her lifelong home. Even when most of her radical, bohemian friends lived in the colorful enclave of Greenwich Village, she remained drawn to its tenements.

Often, years later at the Catholic Worker, she would talk about the "mystery of poverty"—how, "in sharing it, making ourselves poor in giving to others, we increase our knowledge of and belief in love."



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:

Her impact on humanity is the best evidence of her sainthood.

**Nikki Nordstrom,
Cottonwood, ID**

She was a woman who labored for compassion and justice for all persons.

Florence Mallon, S.C., Bronx, NY

The world needs more role models of true Christian charity.

Olivia Gawet, Rutland, VT

My attention came from hearing Pope Francis’s address to Congress...she is a sister of our time.

Joseph Nawn, Media, PA

Dorothy Day’s work continues to help the disadvantaged through the Catholic Worker houses. Duluth has three with wonderful young people contributing.

Mary Slattery, Duluth, MN

She truly lived “love one another as I have loved you.”

**Regina Bernard McCartney,
Convent Station, NJ**

DISPATCHES!

The Roman postulator for the cause of canonization, Dr. Waldery Hilgeman, visited New York on January 24-26 to meet with officials actively working on the cause, including his local counterpart, Msgr. Gregory Mustaciuolo, vicar general of the Archdiocese and vice postulator for the cause. He also met with members of the Advisory Committee (see following entry), established at the Guild’s inception. Throughout his visit, Dr. Hilgeman expressed optimism for the cause, noting, among other things, the Pope’s personal interest in Dorothy Day as an important American.

Vital to his coming was a review of materials and work conducted to date. Here are some of the major accomplishments shared:

- Dorothy’s known publications have been collected, although new ones turn up every year;
- Over half of our 50 eyewitnesses have provided testimony; some will be called back for additional testimony;
- The theological censors have reviewed over a third of Dorothy’s publications;
- The Archdiocese has hired two graduate students to scan all of Dorothy’s unpublished documents in the Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection at Marquette University. All of her diaries as well as selected letters will be transcribed for officials in the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Historic Catholic Worker houses on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, St. Joseph House and Maryhouse (the latter where Dorothy lived in her later years and the place of her death) graciously extended their hospitality to Dr. Hilgeman. After enjoying lively conversation over a quintessential soup and bread lunch, he also visited nearby Holy Redeemer Church where Dorothy frequently prayed.



We owe ongoing thanks to the Guild’s Advisory Committee. Currently numbering fifteen members, many of whom knew and worked with Dorothy Day, all share generously their time and insights:

- *Sr. Mary Donald Corcoran, O.S.B.*, a member of the Benedictine Community and Prioress of Transfiguration Monastery in Windsor, New York;
- *Monica Cornell*, a longtime practitioner of CW hospitality, most currently at the Peter Maurin Farm in Marlboro, New York with her husband Tom;
- *Tom Cornell*, a community member in New York City and managing editor of the *Catholic Worker* (CW) in the early 1960s, currently an associate editor;
- *Robert Ellsberg*, community member in New York City and CW managing editor in the late 1970s, author and editor of Day’s journals and correspondence who has written extensively on the lives of the saints;
- *Robert Gilliam*, community member originally in the Midwest and later in New York City in the 1960s and frequent voice in the paper on the movement’s pacifism;

(Cont’d on p. 11)

(“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.)

SAINTLY MATTERS

Peter Maurin liked to say that the task of the Catholic Worker was to help make the world a place where it was easier “to be good.” He may well have said “virtuous,” a word once substituted by Dorothy Day, but perhaps they both feared it sounded a little old fashioned or even preachy. Yet in one of Peter’s favorite encyclicals, *Auspicato Concessum*, Leo XIII states that if the institutes of St. Francis of Assisi were revived — Francis whose prophetic linking of poverty and pacifism prefigured the Worker’s own—“every Christian virtue would easily flourish.”

It’s the seven cornerstone virtues that are central to the “proof” of any candidate’s sainthood: the three theological or “supernatural” (so called because they are infused by grace) virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and the four cardinal or “human” virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Since all Christians are expected to practice these virtues, a saint is someone who practices them to a “heroic” degree.

In Christian iconography, perhaps nothing captures more the desired intensity than the medieval image of St. George slaying the dragon. In fact, going back to Augustine, virtues were often paired with their complementary vice (faith/pride, charity/avarice, etc.). In a celebrated passage, Augustine says, “we make a ladder out of our virtues if we trample the vices under foot.” Far from being merely good manners or social affectations, virtue is seen as a kind of moral-mortal combat.

Twentieth century Catholic philosopher Josef Pieper echoes this vigorous understanding of virtue, bemoaning the overvaluation of moderation that reduces contemporary morality to a hollow convention. Rather, he holds that the practice of virtue leads to realizing the purpose for which we were made: to love. Unconditionally.

The saints understood this. Certainly Dorothy who emulated them did. “To be a saint,” she wrote, “is to be a lover, ready to leave all, to give all.”

But if virtue has a singular goal, its practice can take a multitude of forms. One of the amazements in reading the lives of the saints comes from the breadth of these forms and the creativity—reflecting both the uniqueness of their personalities and times—they embody. (St. Louis visited hospitals, St. Catherine of Siena confronted power, St. Gregory received pilgrims, St. John the Baptist risked imprisonment, etc.!)

Dorothy’s “form”—the Catholic Worker—is marked by a concreteness that makes us take notice. Feeding the hungry. Clothing the naked. Sheltering the homeless. The imperatives of the Sermon on the Mount, so frequently dismissed as being unrealistic, applied daily. “If ‘we see only Jesus’ in all who come to us, then it is easier,” Dorothy wrote.

As Michael Harrington, author of *The Other America* and a former *Catholic Worker* editor, observed, “For Dorothy, as we used to say over and over again at the Catholic Worker, the task is to see Christ in every single being. And you had to look at a haggard, beaten, scabbed, not very pretty guy who stumbled in off the Bowery, and you had to be able to look at that person and be around, and that person stank, and you had to say, ‘that is Christ’. That is what Dorothy is all about.”

And, with a startling consistency, she refused to flinch from

(Cont’d on p. 10)

At Root...

The saints—always Dorothy’s vital companions “on the way”—lit the path of virtue, serving as a source of encouragement. Here is only a handful of their guideposts.

Unless you strive after virtues and practice them, you’ll never grow to be more than dwarfs.

— St. Teresa of Avila

It is well for everybody to select some special virtue at which to aim, not as neglecting any others, but as an object and pursuit to the mind.

— St. Francis de Sales

If, then, we ask what it is to live well...it must assuredly be to love virtue, to love wisdom, to love truth, and to love with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind.

—St. Augustine

The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God.

—St. Gregory of Nyssa

What we love we shall grow to resemble.

—St. Bernard of Clairvaux

One should not say that it is impossible to reach a virtuous life; but one should say that it is not easy.

— St. Anthony of the Desert

Charity wins souls and draws them to virtue.

—St. Angela Merici

EASY ESSAYS

by Peter Maurin*

*Modern society calls the beggars,
bums and panhandlers
and gives them the bum's rush.
But the Greeks used to say
that people in need are, in fact,
the ambassadors of the gods.*

*The world will be better off
If people tried to become better.
And people would become better
If they stopped trying to be better off.
For when everyone tries to become better off
Nobody is better off.
But when everyone tries to become better
Everybody is better off.*



I felt that the Church was the Church of the poor, that St. Patrick's had been built from the pennies of servant girls, that it cared for the immigrant... but at the same time I did not feel it set its face against the social order which made so much charity necessary.

— Dorothy Day

* It was Peter Maurin who brought to the recently-converted Day the depth of Catholic Social teaching. He wrote "Easy Essays" to reach the man in the street.

Images: St. Joseph's House, NYC (top left); Dorothy Day praying at the Church of the Nativity, NYC, ca 1970 (top right); new immigrants, Ellis Island, ca 1900 (bottom)



By Nancy L. Roberts

(A professor of communication and journalism, currently on the faculty at SUNY Albany, Nancy Roberts celebrated Dorothy's vocation as a writer in her engaging book, *Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker*. She is also the co-editor of the award-winning study of Day as peacemaker, *American Catholic Pacifism: The Influence of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement*. We are grateful for her turning her journalistic eye to her own story, intertwined with Dorothy's.)

As a historian of journalism, particularly the alternative press, I've spent a lot of time studying the writing of social activists, such as advocates for peace, racial justice, and women's rights. Many such reformers and radicals populate American history, partly because our First Amendment offers unparalleled protection for freedom of expression. But none command my attention or reach my heart in the way Dorothy Day does. As a grade schooler at Our Lady of Lourdes in my hometown of Utica, N.Y., I never heard her name; nor did I encounter her as an undergraduate history major at Swarthmore, the Quaker-founded college near Philadelphia. Looking back, this is surprising, because after all, the Society of Friends is one of the historic peace churches. In fact, it was at nearby Pendle Hill, the Quaker center, that Dorothy first met Fritz Eichenberg, the Jewish emigré from Nazi Germany who converted to Quakerism on the eve of World War II and whose wood engravings have graced the *Catholic Worker* since 1950.

In the early 1970s during a college recess, I returned home to the small town of Deansboro in central New York (where my family had moved) and first encountered Dorothy Day through copies of her newspaper that were kept in the back of our family's church, St. Joseph's, in nearby Oriskany Falls. As I paged through the *Catholic Worker*, it was probably

Fritz Eichenberg's marvelous wood engravings, such as the iconic "The Christ of the Breadlines" that first commanded my attention. I'd grown up with many of his illustrations of classic books, including his portrayals of Cathy and Heathcliff from my mother's frayed but treasured copy of *Wuthering Heights*. My five siblings and I wore out its pages, endlessly thumbing through the haunting pictures. Besides offering wonderful art, the *Catholic Worker* was unexpectedly literate and, most unexpectedly, far more progressive than anything else to be found in this still very conservative part of the state. A Catholic paper advocating social justice and pacifism was a real long shot. But there it was, and the next thing I knew, I was reading Dorothy's autobiography *The Long Loneliness* and all the *Catholic Worker* copies available.

Is the pen mightier than the sword? Dorothy's life and work have always demonstrated to me that the answer is yes. And that the pen is most powerful when it's in the hand of someone who not only writes about her passionately felt convictions, but actually practices them. Robert Ellsberg nailed it when he wrote in the introduction to *By Little and By Little: The Selected Writings of Dorothy Day*, the collection of her work that he edited, that "there was no distinction between what she believed, what she wrote, and the manner

in which she lived her life." Her experience of living in voluntary poverty for nearly fifty years at the Catholic Worker house of hospitality on the Lower East Side deeply informed her writing about poverty and social justice, giving it the force of authenticity.

Going even beyond what journalists call "immersion" or "saturation" reporting, Dorothy embraced participant observation. It's been practiced by many who wanted to discover and communicate how The Other lives, usually for compassionate motives. In the late nineteenth century, Stephen Crane lived briefly as a homeless man on the streets of New York City so he could inform

newspaper readers about the problem of urban poverty there. About the same time, another newspaper reporter, Nellie Bly, went undercover to the Women's Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell's Island, feigning insanity to be committed as a patient so she could investigate harmful practices. In our time, we still see journalists "walking the talk" in this way. One is the activist Barbara Ehrenreich, who worked several blue-collar minimum-wage jobs (waitress, hotel maid, house cleaner, nursing-home aide, and Wal-Mart associate) for several months so she could discover whether it is possible for such workers to feed, shelter, and clothe themselves (it



isn't), as reported in her widely acclaimed book, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America* (2001).

While all of these writers should be commended for their social concern, none approach Dorothy's intensity and commitment. What sets her apart is her Catholic spirituality, a deep reservoir that sustained her activism through the most treacherous times. For example, the march of fascism through Europe in the 1930s, including the Nazi horror of Kristallnacht (1938) and then U.S. entry into World War II (1941) brought despair to anyone with pacifist convictions. At this time Dorothy faced the looming split of Catholic Workers who felt that fighting fascism was justification for the war (including such Chicago Catholic Worker stalwarts as John Cogley, James O'Gara, and Thomas Sullivan) and those who shared her commitment to the movement's pacifism. She handled this with grace, remaining friendly even with those dissidents who enlisted.

When the United States entered the war in December 1941 right after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Dorothy wrote in the *Catholic Worker*: "Lord God, merciful God, our Father, shall we keep silent, or shall we speak? And if we speak, what shall we say?" Reading this nearly eight decades later, one can grasp the gravity of the situation she then found herself in, as the Catholic Worker leader. She went on: "Our manifesto is the Sermon on the Mount, which means that we will try to be peacemakers. Speaking for many of our conscientious objectors, we will not participate in armed warfare or in making munitions, or by buying government bonds to prosecute the war..." Hewing the paper to the movement's Christian pacifist stance, she pledged that Catholic Workers would continue their Works of Mercy, including spiritual warfare such as prayer and fasting to hasten the end of the war. And while there might be limits to "how much collaboration we can have with the government in times like these," she also begged "that there will be mutual charity, and forbearance among us all."

The U.S.'s dropping of the first atomic bombs, on Hiroshima and then Nagasaki, was almost beyond belief for Dorothy. While newspapers carried joyful stories about the anticipated end of the war and the peacetime uses predicted for the new atomic power source, Dorothy expressed her profound sadness at the massive destruction, deaths, and suffering in the September 1945 *Catholic Worker*: "We have killed 318,000 Japanese...they are vaporized, our Japanese

brothers, scattered, men, women and babies, to the four winds, over the seven seas. Perhaps we will breathe their dust into our nostrils, feel them in the fog of New York on our faces, feel them in the rain on the hills of Easton" [the Catholic Worker farm in Pennsylvania]. I still get chills reading these words of Dorothy's. For more than thirty years, I've assigned my journalism history students this piece as an example of an alternative-press viewpoint during a time when the mainstream news outlets all got on the side of and

reinforced the government's pursuit of a nuclear arms race. It must have taken enormous courage for Dorothy to publish this.

As it surely must have to protest the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg...and to remain thoroughlygoingly pacifist through the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam. The Cold War climate during the Korean War frightened many newspapers into silence, but not Dorothy Day's. While her *Catholic Worker* muted criticism of U.S. involvement in the war, it emphasized the role of love in ending the conflict. "We are on the side of the poor," Dorothy wrote in the *Catholic Worker*. And who were "the poor"? They were "our soldiers in Korea fighting in zero weather, thousands of them suffering and tortured and dying..." And importantly, she added that "the poor" also included "the Koreans themselves, north and south, who have been bombed out, burnt out in the rain of fire from heaven." This last statement, at a time when even massive civilian casualties had become an acceptable tactic of warfare (witness the World War II bombing of cities such as London, Dresden, and Tokyo) shows remarkable bravery. So does her daring 1953 declaration in the *Catholic Worker* of how twisted religion can become "when Christian prelates sprinkle holy water on scrap metal, to be used for obliteration bombing, and name bombers for the Holy Innocents, for Our Lady of Mercy; [and] bless a man about to press a button which releases death on fifty thousand human beings including little babies, children, the sick, the aged, the innocent as well as the guilty."

In 1967 in the midst of the war in Vietnam, Dorothy wrote a masterful essay, "In Peace Is My Bitterness Most Bitter," in which she criticized the United States's practice of supplying arms and money around the world for what have come to be called proxy wars. "It is not just Vietnam, it is South Africa,

(Cont'd on p. 10)



(*Breaking Bread*, cont'd from p. 9)

it is Nigeria, the Congo, Indonesia, all of Latin America,” she wrote. “It is not just the pictures of all the women and children who have been burnt alive in Vietnam, or the men who have been tortured, and died.”

The only way Dorothy could have stayed her course is through a profound religious faith that sustained her in the midst of such distressing times. This is a signature aspect of her life and work that sets her apart from

most other activists and which has inspired millions. She wrote in her autobiography *The Long Loneliness* that she turned to God “not because I was tired of sex, satiated, disillusioned...” Rather, “it was because through a whole love, both physical and spiritual, I came to know God.” Because she was able to sense God’s presence especially in the poor and vulnerable, she chose to join the Catholic Church, “the

church of the poor.” Ultimately she showed us the enormous impact that even a single lay person can have, in helping to bring about social justice in this world while also being mindful of the next. ■

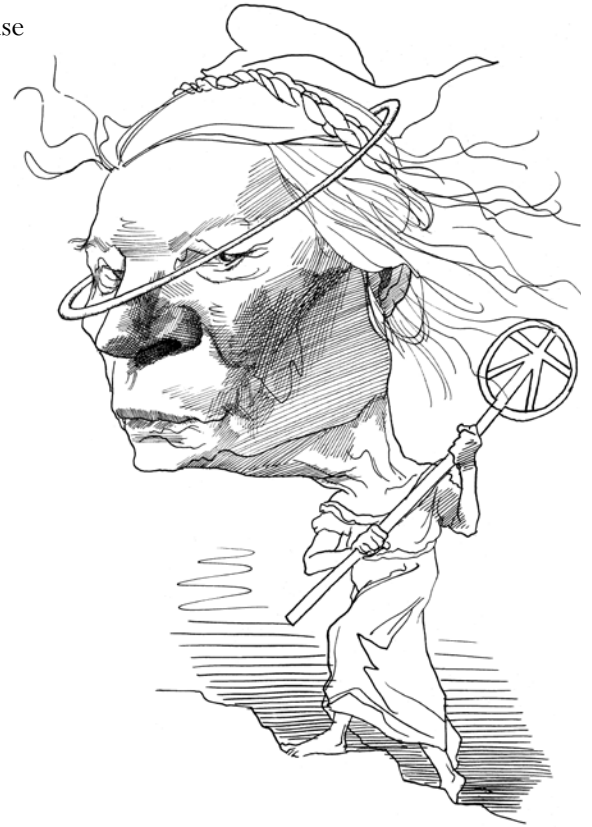
Houses of hospitality crisscross the U.S. and can be found in every state. Though their count is always changing, they number easily over 100—more than double the number at Dorothy



Day’s death. Houses have also sprung up in Europe and as far away as Australia.

Still Dorothy would never measure “success” by numbers or longevity. Only by fidelity. Perhaps, ironically, that’s why the Catholic Worker movement continues to flourish and grow.

Left: First of Dorothy’s books on the Catholic Worker, describing its beginnings



Dorothy Day, by David Levine.

© Matthew and Eve Levine

(*Good Talk*, cont'd from p. 4)

how God’s presence might best fit into a particular situation, and how God might most clearly touch the lives of others through her response. That is the clearest example of *imago Dei* (image of God) I can think of: Since God is love, we are best imaging the divine presence when we love.

Anything you’d like to add, Dan?

Yes. In addition to my thanks for this wonderful invitation, it is only appropriate to end my reflections with a passage that is most familiar to your readers, but one upon which we can never reflect enough. It brings together perfectly all of the thoughts I have expressed, and is a lovely description of

Dorothy’s life and the ongoing witness of the Catholic Worker:

“We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know Him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of 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” (*The Long Loneliness*). ■

(*Saintly Matters*, cont'd from p. 6)

the hard logic of the Gospel, insisting that we also “see Jesus” in the guise of the enemy.

Arguably, Dorothy’s collective virtue lies in her faithfulness to the Gospel ethic of love. Doubtless, she wouldn’t have characterized it as “heroic”. Rather, she would likely view it as a wholly human response to the ultimate gift of Love. For Dorothy, as for all the saints, it was (and remains) just a matter of practice. —CZ

(Dispatches!, cont'd from p. 3)

- *Geoffrey B. Gneuchs*, former chaplain to the New York City house who presided at Day's funeral Mass, visual artist who has painted several portraits of Day in her later years;
- *Martha Hennessy*, peace activist and current member of the New York City CW community who bears the distinction of being one of Dorothy Day's nine grandchildren;
- *Kathleen DeSutter Jordan*, community member and editor in New York City during the VietNam era; for decades, with her husband Patrick, maintained Dorothy's Staten Island beach cottage;
- *Patrick Jordan*, community member in New York City during the turbulent 1960s and 70s where he served as CW editor, author of several books exploring Day's life and witness
- *David Mueller*, cofounder and coordinator of the Dorothy Day Canonization Support Network;
- *Phillip M. Runkel*, archivist/director of the Dorothy

Day-Catholic Worker Collection at Marquette University;

- *Most Rev. Dennis Sullivan*, Bishop of Camden, New Jersey;
- *Msgr. Kevin Sullivan*, Executive Director, New York Catholic Charities;
- *Louise Zwick*, with her late husband, Mark*, co-author of major studies on the roots of the Catholic Worker movement and co-founder of the Houston Catholic Worker;
- *George B. Horton*, Director of Social and Community Development, New York Catholic Charities, and a vice postulator for the cause.



*The Guild remembers with joy and gratitude *Mark Zwick* who entered new life in November, 2016. Surely, Dorothy embraced him then, as we do Louise and members of the Casa Juan Diego community. Mark Zwick: *presente!*



Coming to New York City?

New York City's newly renovated St. Patrick's Cathedral welcomes all to the celebration of a monthly Mass for the canonization of Servant of God Dorothy Day.

Second Saturday of every month, 5:30 pm;

5th Avenue (50th-51st Streets).

In Our Time

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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!

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AS WE COME TO KNOW THE SERIOUSNESS
OF THE SITUATION, THE WAR, THE RACISM,
THE POVERTY IN OUR WORLD, WE COME
TO REALIZE THAT THINGS WILL NOT
BE CHANGED SIMPLY BY WORDS OR
DEMONSTRATIONS. RATHER, IT'S A
QUESTION OF LIVING ONE'S LIFE
IN A DRASTICALLY DIFFERENT WAY.

DOROTHY DAY

