

IN OUR TIME

Newsletter of the Dorothy Day Guild
Volume 2, Issue 3 Fall 2016



Dear Friends and Supporters,

Greetings from the Guild! If there were but a single month that beckons us to heighten our efforts for the cause of Dorothy Day, it would surely be November: the month of All Saints Day and All Souls; the month of Dorothy's birthday and her death; and the month of Thanksgiving.

There are many reasons we believe Dorothy is a saint for our time. Her pacifism, her Incarnational spirituality, her wedding of charity with justice, to name just the few of her qualities that we have explored in previous newsletters. In this Fall issue, and in this holy month of all saints and the completion of the Holy Year of mercy, we hold up to the light and marvel at another of Dorothy's gifts to us: her vocation as a lay person.

Long before the Second Vatican Council, Dorothy took up the theme of the universal call to holiness. It is the saints, she wrote again and again in the pages of the *Catholic Worker*, that remind us of our true vocation. All Christians, she noted, are called to put off the old person and to put on Christ, to respond to their particular call to holiness, whatever form that might require. Consequently, on the question of saints—she stated in her inimitably no-nonsense style—"We might as well get over our bourgeois fear of the name."

Uncannily, Dorothy also foreshadowed Vatican II's emphasis not only on the sanctity of the laity but also on its unique task: to work for a just ordering of society. "She took the Sermon on the Mount literally and insisted on applying it to everything she tried and did," observed Eileen Egan, her longtime friend and colleague. "She's a tremendous example, a tremendous inspiration for lay people."

Dorothy is also a powerful testament to the need for community ("We have all known the long loneliness," she poignantly observed in her autobiography of the same name, "and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community"). In this issue, Marie Dennis underscores the import of community in Good Talk (see p. 3).

Dorothy believed in and drew on another communion, the ancient Christian doctrine of the "communio sanctorum," the communion of saints. In the midst of another critical event this November, the U.S. presidential election, this doctrine speaks to the disconnection, the divide, many Americans feel, one from the other. In stark contrast, according to Kenneth Woodward, author of *Making Saints*, "the saints in the Catholic tradition cannot be understood apart from the experience of radical communion: an experience of the truth that 'in God we are all connected, giving and receiving unexpected and undeserved acts of grace.'"

Dorothy exemplified that connection. And, in doing so, she inspired—and continues to inspire—countless other lay people to be, in the words of Pope Francis, "a leaven of the love of God in society itself, to create and sow hope, not from a pulpit but from their everyday lives."

More than ever, we need to ensure, through Dorothy Day's canonization, that her witness be known, her model of holiness be upheld, generation to generation. More than ever, we need your support (see page 11). And more than ever, at this time of national Thanksgiving, we want to thank you for your continued help to forward her cause. In the words inscribed on her tombstone, "Deo Gratias."

WE ARE IN NEED OF LAY
PEOPLE WHO RISK, WHO
SOIL THEIR HANDS, WHO
ARE NOT AFRAID OF MAKING
MISTAKES, WHO GO FORWARD...
WE ARE IN NEED OF LAYPEOPLE
WITH THE TASTE OF THE EXPERIENCE
OF LIFE, WHO DARE TO DREAM.
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.*

YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.
A CITY SET ON A MOUNTAIN CANNOT
BE HIDDEN. NOR DO THEY LIGHT A
LAMP AND THEN PUT IT UNDER A
BUSHEL BASKET; IT IS SET ON A
LAMPSTAND, WHERE IT GIVES LIGHT
TO ALL IN THE HOUSE. JUST SO,
YOUR LIGHT MUST SHINE BEFORE
OTHERS, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR
GOOD DEEDS AND GLORIFY YOUR
HEAVENLY FATHER.
MATTHEW 5:14-16

GOOD TALK with Marie Dennis

(We thank Marie Dennis for generously granting *In Our Time* this interview. Marie is co-president of Pax Christi International. A mother of six who lives in a Franciscan community in the inner city of Washington, D.C., she is the author of several books, including *Diversity of Vocations* (Orbis Books, 2008.)

***In Our Time*: You've described the Christian vocation as an "invitation to follow Jesus"—an invitation that demands an uncompromising break with "business as usual." Certainly that was Dorothy's experience...**

Dorothy's response to the vocation/call she so clearly discerned is an extraordinary example of an "uncompromising break with business as usual." I think it is especially inspiring because she was already so fully engaged in life as a young woman of her "times" and a journalist who cared deeply about the rights of women, impoverished people, and others marginalized by U.S. society in the early twentieth century. Her call to a deeper commitment was enriched by faith and grounded in love of God.

Dorothy longed for a path in life that was equal to her passions. "I wanted life, and I wanted the abundant life. I wanted it for others

too.... And I did not have the slightest idea how to find it." Can you talk a little about some of the "clues" she found that helped her on her way?

I think Dorothy was deeply touched by the reality she encountered in the streets of New York. The poverty she witnessed in the midst of the Depression was one clue. Another I believe was in her own active mind and spirit. She obviously reflected deeply on the life of her daughter, Tamar, and was moved to change her life in response. A third forceful clue was in her encounter and friendship with Peter Maurin, who engaged Dorothy intellectually in powerful ways.

Dorothy famously and tearfully prayed, following her reporting

from the sidelines on the 1932 Communist-led Hunger March in Washington, D.C., that some way would open up for her to use what talents she possessed to serve the poor and unemployed. How has the role of the laity evolved in regard to working for social justice?

In many ways Dorothy was an inspiration and an anchor for a movement of Catholics, including many lay people, who responded to critical social issues of a given era. She was not alone in caring about the poor and unemployed—although it does seem such work was then primarily the vocation of many men and women religious. However, the rich social teaching documents of the Church before [*Rerum Novarum*, *Quadragesimo Anno*, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*], during

Always the journalist, Dorothy Day made sure the *Catholic Worker* newspaper was written and edited largely by lay people and never sought any "official" Church endorsement of its contents. An entry in her diary reads: "Press day—late again but good issue.... Too long center article by Merton. After all we are a layman's paper—for workers not men of letters."

Upon having reviewed the October 1962 issue, prominently featuring three articles all written by priests, she scolded Tom Cornell, one of the editors (now on the Guild Advisory board), "What are you trying to do.... This is a layman's paper!"

[especially *Gaudium et Spes*] and after [*Call to Action, Justice in the World.*] the Second Vatican Council brought lay people to the heart of the Church's work for social justice.

We tend to think of Dorothy's "vocation" as being the Catholic Worker movement. But that involved many different kinds of activities: from writing to protesting to speaking to ladling out soup. And she was always a mother and later a grandmother. Is this what you mean by having a "diversity" of vocations?

Yes, absolutely. That is the experience of so many of us. The diversity of Dorothy's vocations was particularly inspiring to me. As one who has lived in an intentional community (Assisi Community) for the past thirty years, including with four of my children, I was deeply moved by Dorothy's struggles as a mother living in the Catholic Worker community. At the same time, her radical appropriation of the Gospel message, especially her commitment to the poor and homeless, as the norm for life as a lay person was deeply challenging and inspiring.

Dorothy characterized several periods of her life as times of "wandering," notably a five-year stretch following her conversion where, though she participated in the sacraments, she had no Catholic friends. Later at the Catholic Worker, the importance of community was repeatedly stressed. What role in Dorothy's life, and in general, do you attribute to community?

I believe that community became central to Dorothy's life once she had started the Catholic Worker. Community kept her grounded at the margins of society and often helped her discern the way forward. In the book I wrote with others, *St. Francis and the Foolishness of God* (Orbis, revised 2015), we wrote about the evolution of community in the life of the Church, to which Dorothy and the



Catholic Worker made a huge contribution.

Dorothy never saw the Catholic Worker "vocation" as being for everyone. But she did see certain practices, regardless of the particular form one's vocation took, as being fundamental to any Christian life, right?

I assume that Dorothy would see a connection to marginalized people, simplicity of lifestyle, and connection to community in some form to be essential to the Christian life. All of these speak to being "poor in spirit." *Diversity of Vocations* has a section that reflects on this from my perspective:

To be poor in spirit we have to live in a manner that is conscious of the reality in which most people live; understand the systemic and structural connections between our prosperity and others' poverty.

To be poor in spirit we have to shape our lives and futures from the standpoint and for the sake of those who are poor.

But, how does this vocation—to be poor in spirit—this privileged place of poor people—intersect with other calls we have heard, the call to parenting, for example, or the call to a single life, or the call to teaching, to mission, to

medicine? Is this call of Jesus, this foundational theme in the beatitudes, reserved for a chosen few?

That only a few should care about the poor clearly was not the message of the Sermon on the Mount, but to live in solidarity with those who are poor, to be poor in spirit with all that vocation implies remains a tremendous challenge for followers of Jesus who, like the rich young man in the gospel have "many possessions" or already busy lives. (Mark 10:23 NRSV)

... Every parent, I suspect, tries to instill in one's child an awareness that all the children in the world don't have hundreds of choices in breakfast cereal or the latest computer or even a house to live in. I believe deeply that teaching children to live simply—modeling for them how to live with less on a daily basis in a consumer society—is one of the greatest gifts we can give them.

Choosing to live in neighborhoods and towns that are economically diverse; where people with vastly different means live side by side; where their children go to school together and play together; where employers and employees know each other as human beings; and where people commit themselves to the common good is another.

(Cont'd on p. 8)

SAINTLY MATTERS

Like so much else, our popular understanding of sainthood changed with the convening of the Second Vatican Council. Sanctity was “democratized.” No longer could we comfortably assign it to the province of the “professionally” religious. Something termed “the universal call to holiness” reminded us that not only is sanctity within the grasp of ordinary lay faithful, but also that the living of a holy life is the true vocation of anyone and all who are baptized. Plain and simple. And something convert and laywoman Dorothy Day always understood.

Fifty years after the Council, Pope Francis has echoed this understanding. Meeting with pilgrims shortly after All Saints Day in 2014, he stated that holiness “is not the prerogative of only a few: holiness is a gift that is offered to all, without exception, so that it constitutes the distinctive character of every Christian.... We are all called to be saints.”

Historically, the spiritual path of the laity had taken many twists and turns before Vatican II shed its bold light. In the early Church, the baptized laity took their faith so seriously many were willing to die for it. And as Tertullian would observe in his *Apologeticus*, it was the blood of the martyrs that was the “seed of the Church.” Other forms of witness (the literal meaning of “martyr”) developed, in response to radically changing times and needs. By 315 AD, when Christianity became the established religion of the Roman Empire, the clerical and monastic states began to organize and expand, meriting much praise, but leading to an unwitting separation from ordinary lay people. By the Middle Ages in the Western Church, a kind of hierarchy of holiness had emerged: first bishops, clergy, then monks and friars, and cloistered nuns—who disparaged the evils of the material world—and finally, the laity.

It was not until the Conciliar Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity and later, the 1987 World Synod on the Laity, that the vocation of the laity was placed on equal footing with that of the clergy and those in consecrated life. Regardless of one’s vocational status—cleric or lay—declared leading Vatican II theologian Yves Congar, “It means becoming a whole human creature for Christ’s sake, a human being captured, occupied, possessed, vitalized by faith.”

Moreover, the Council upheld a unique role for the laity, tied to the Church’s secular mission. The laity, it taught, bear a fundamental responsibility both for evangelization and for the renewal of the whole social order. Further, the responsibility is not a delegated one, but something that the laity possess in their own right, appointed to the apostolate by Christ himself. In fact, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI, proposed that the laity should be thought of as having their own office in the Church, distinct from the ordained.

Arguably, it is the social dimension of the lay vocation which is sometimes overlooked or neglected. Just as all believers are called to be holy, all are called to serve “the least of these,” to “hunger and thirst for justice,” to be “peacemakers.” And again, if any modern American Catholic understood this more clearly—and exemplified it more fully—it was Dorothy Day.

Still, Dorothy aside, the ranks of declared candidates for sainthood remain stunningly thin in the Western Church when it comes to ordinary lay people. Both in history and in recent times, the vast majority of saints have been priests and members of religious orders, reinforcing the old equation of vowed religious life with a disposition for sanctity. Apart from martyrs, of the unprecedented thousand or so saints beatified or canonized under St. Pope John Paul II, the majority were founders or members of religious orders. This in no way questions their heroic sanctity, but, in the midst of the Church’s continued exhortation to lay people to lead holy lives, the question arises: why are there still relatively few canonized role models for the laity?

In her serious prayer life and lifetime of service to the poor, Dorothy recalls the witness of the many saints before her. But as a layperson, as a woman, as an unmarried mother, as the leader of a Catholic lay movement whose prophetic stances would enlarge the social conscience of the Church she loved, Dorothy offers a singular example for lay people—perhaps even for her becoming their patron saint. Pope Francis has said the Church is looking for “saints without cassocks and without veils.” Undoubtedly, in Dorothy Day we have one.

—C.Z., Editor

At Root...

It is hard to overstate how much the saints impacted the life of Dorothy Day. Their insights, like those below, helped inspire, ground, and sustain the Catholic Worker:

Love God and do as you will.

St. Augustine

Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.

St. Francis of Assisi

Jacob did not cease to be a saint because he had to attend to his flocks.

St. Térésa of Avila

To the Servant of God...everyplace is the right place, every time the right time.

St. Catherine of Siena

How great is the freedom to which you are called.

St. Benedict

Sanctify yourself and you will sanctify society.

St. Francis of Assisi

You know well enough that Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, not even at their difficulty, but at the love with which we do them.

St. Therese of Lisieux



VOX POP

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

She truly is a model of the Catholic Christian life for us in the United States.

Sr. Barbara Conroy
Patterson, NJ

How amazing that she courageously witnessed to care for the poor and for peace when few inside and out of the Church supported her in her Gospel stance.

Sr. Lorraine Cooper
Yonkers, NY

Dorothy Day is an inspiration to all trying to live out the universal call to holiness and living the beatitudes.

Fr. Michael Wood
Springfield, MA

So happy to see that she has been added to the ranks of the American Episcopal Church's Holy Women, Holy Men!

Elaine Madison
Kailua, HI

DISPATCHES!

Focus has temporarily shifted at the cause from conducting more eyewitness interviews to transcribing those already in hand. In addition, it was deemed imperative to review all the already gathered paperwork and documentation to ensure that they meet the canonical requirements. Toward this end, the cause has commenced establishing a closer and more direct link with the Congregation for Saints in Rome, including hiring a Roman postulator.

As always, the Guild is buoyed by the constant support of Cardinal Timothy Dolan and Msgr. Gregory Mustaciuolo, appointed as the cause's diocesan postulator in 2000 by Cardinal John O'Connor. (It was Cardinal O'Connor who petitioned Rome to open Dorothy's cause, stating in his letter, "If anybody in our time can be called a saint, she can.")



The immense task of gathering all of Dorothy's writings and publications, ably overseen by Guild coordinator Jeff Korgen, continues to make marked progress. Alex Avitabile continues to generously volunteer his research expertise. As a then-Jesuit seminarian in 1971, Alex published the first comprehensive bibliography on Day and the Worker, a seminal resource. Both Jeff and Alex have commented on their being struck by the continuity of Day's concern for the poor. "Whether she's writing before or after her conversion," Alex reflected, "her empathy for and her efforts to give a human face to the poor animate her writing."



Over 70 percent of the pieces authored by Dorothy for publications other than the *Catholic Worker*, including those in Catholic publications like *Commonweal* and *America*; "radical" pre-World War I publications like *The Liberator* and *The Masses*; and newspapers like the New Orleans Item and the *Corpus Christi Reporter* are already in hand. Articles in more obscure publications are now being sought, moving the search from major local research libraries, primarily the New York and Brooklyn Public Libraries, to a range of university libraries, including Boston College, Catholic University in Washington, D.C., Fordham University, and Marquette University, the latter the home of the Catholic Worker archives.

All of this material will be reviewed by a historical commission, currently in formation.



We invite you to become a Guild representative. There are many creative ways to serve as a liaison to the cause for Dorothy's canonization. Here are several suggestions, courtesy of Guild Advisory Board member David Mueller. Hopefully, they will elicit ideas of your own.

- Make sure there is a steady supply of Guild brochures and prayer cards available. (Note that new brochures will be available by year's end, upon request, from the Guild office. A new prayer card to supplement the original, still widely used, will also be available.)
- Post information in your parish bulletin regarding Guild membership. Sample announcements are available online: www.dorothydayguild.org. Announcements may also want to tie in with the liturgical readings for the day or week.
- If your parish has a Peace and Justice Committee, ask to be a member and assume as a primary focus educating others about Day's witness.

Following are complementary reflections on the lay vocation, alternating between Dorothy Day and the teaching Magisterium of the Church (*italicized and bolded*).

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

The forms and tasks of life are many, but holiness is one— that sanctity which is cultivated by all who act under God's Spirit.

(Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, Lumen Gentium, 41)

The significance of our smallest acts! The significance of the little things we leave undone! The protests we do not make, the stands we do not take, we who are living in the world. (DD)

The laity...make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can she become the salt of the earth.

(Lumen Gentium, 31)

Bishop O'Hara of Kansas City was a good friend and visited us in the earliest days of our work.... He said to Peter (Maurin) on one memorable visit, "Peter, you lead the way, and we (the bishops) will follow." Peter knew what he meant. He meant that it was up to the laity to be in the vanguard, to live in the midst of the battle, to live in the world which God so loved that He sent His only begotten son to us to show us how to live and to die.... We were to explore the paths of what was possible, to find concordances with our opponents, to seek for the common good, to try to work with all men of goodwill.... We could venture...in political and economic fields. We could make mistakes without too great harm, we could retrace our steps, start over again in this attempt to build a new society within the shell of the old.... (DD)

*The initiative of lay Christians is necessary especially when the matter involves discovering or inventing the means for permeating social, political, and economic realities with the demands of Christian doctrine and life.
(Catechism of the Catholic Church)*

(Cont'd from p. 3)

To work toward a society where such an integrated way of life is even possible may be a vocation in itself.

I think Dorothy would agree.

Dorothy liked to say, "You will know your vocation by the joy that it brings you." Can you reflect more on this?

Again, in *Diversity of Vocations* the whole last chapter talks about joy:

God calls us to a fundamental orientation, an option for discipleship, that sets the stage on which we dance the dance of life and promises happiness (Blessed are you ...) to those who heed the call ...

Increasingly, I am convinced that as adults and honest followers of Christ, we know in our souls when we are living faithfully the vocation or vocations to which we have been called. We know Jesus' story very well. We know what and how he called all of us to be and we know when we have followed and when we have turned away in sadness like the rich young man.

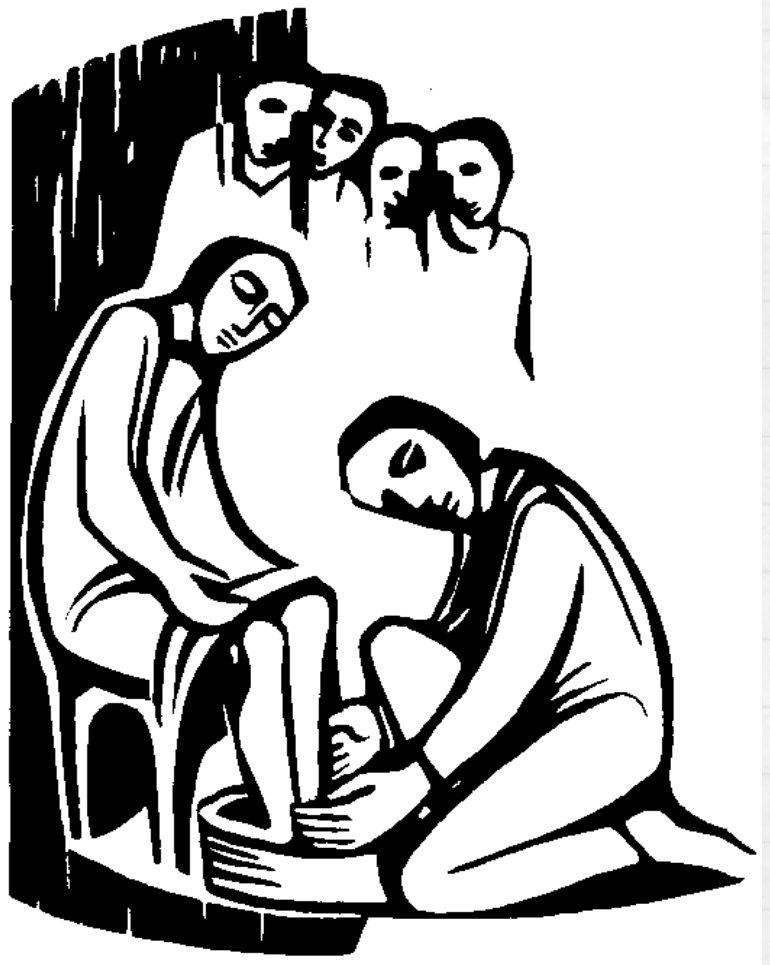
If we look very carefully at the reality of the world into which we are sent—with all its hopes and fears, joys and sorrows ... hopes and fears, joys and sorrows that, if we are open to them, soon become our own—then we will begin to hear the Good News. If we have the courage to ask why the brokenness we see is so pervasive, why the beauty is so rarely seen, then we will begin to hear the Good News. If we have readied ourselves to be changed, converted, to find God as we are called and respond to new vocations, then we will begin to hear the Good News. It will begin to make sense to us in ways we never thought possible; we will see it lived in three dimensions and in brilliant color...

As we accompany the pain and celebrate the beauty wherever we are planted—as we nurture just relationships and live compassionate lives—we are, we will be, helping to build the beloved global community of all life.

And we will know joy.

Anything else, Marie, you'd like to add?

Dorothy's commitment to nonviolence. Even *beyond* a commitment to nonviolence, her strict pacifism was extremely challenging, especially during the Second World War.



In 1963, Dorothy traveled to the Vatican as part of the Women's Peace Pilgrimage (pictured left, back row, center) in support of Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem In Terris* and to ask for a more radical condemnation of the instruments of modern warfare. In September 1965, she was part of a PAX delegation of twenty women, primarily lay people, to the last session of the Council. Fasting for twenty days as a penitential offering for the Council's success, the delegation helped influence the bishops to issue a strong peace statement that included support of conscientious objection.



By Jane Sammon

(A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Jane Sammon has just marked her 44th year living and working at the Catholic Worker in New York City, most of that time at Maryhouse, a house of hospitality founded by Dorothy Day for homeless women. Words like "stalwart" and "anchor" rush to mind to describe her. Jane, however, likes to recall the astute observation of another longtime Catholic Worker, Stanley Vishnewski: "Each of our communities is comprised of saints, and the martyrs who must live with the saints." We deeply appreciate her sharing some of her story with us now.)

I was kindly asked to put a few words to paper about Dorothy Day. But I ask myself whether there can be such a thing as a "few words" about someone known to so many more, and now in a greater variety of places at breakneck speed, thanks, in part, to the proliferation of the social media since the events of her passing [November 29, 1980].

Why am I in the mix of those who may have something to say? I came to the New York Catholic Worker at the end of the summer of 1972, and knew Dorothy Day for a little over the last eight years of her life—not in her salad days, nor in the era of her more youthful escapades or increasing probity or the nascent years of the Catholic Worker movement.

To go back a little, I first saw the New York *Catholic Worker* newspaper in Cleveland, Ohio, and in all honesty, it seemed a bleak, tedious read: black and white, tabloid size—no photos—art, too, that I found somewhat sentimental. But then a certain dawning came; I read on and on, and concluded that there was a pattern of uncommon beauty there, and that in those same pages I was introduced to a new way of thinking about peace, justice, and God. Slowly I was also becoming acquainted with

those who became for me a sort of Catholic quartet—Phil and Dan Berrigan, Thomas Merton, and of course, Dorothy Day.

I decided to hitch my wagon to the stars. I left for New York post-college and with the generous welcome of two friends who were doing grad work in New York, I began my life in this city of dreams. Within a very short time, I made my way to St. Joseph's House, fueled by what I had read in the *Catholic Worker*. Here I would find people who not only talked about poverty, but lived with the poor; who not only recognized the efficacy of civil disobedience, but who themselves were willing to go to jail if necessary; and who were respectful of the Church and its practices.

Still, I can't say I came to the Catholic Worker to meet Dorothy Day, and perhaps was not even aware that someone of her notoriety would ever be around—the columns I read indicated that she traveled a good deal, that she spent time at the CW farm upstate in Tivoli, New York, and with various members of her own family, especially her daughter in Vermont. I could honestly say that I came for a way of life, growing in the understanding that I was a layperson. For if there were anything I did know about the Catholic Worker, I knew it was pitched as a movement of lay people. That much I knew I wanted.

When I was in college, I did not use the term "the laity." Of course I had heard it mooted about, most likely in a theology class within a stone's throw in time from the Second Vatican Council, with its emphasis on the laity. But I never thought of myself that way. After all, I was among what perhaps today's pundits would label an example of that growing class of "disaffected youth," the "Why go to church, I don't get a thing out of it?" generation. For I was a college-aged person in a Catholic environment, experiencing a growing dis-ease with the Vietnam War. I wanted someone to shake me up and say, "Enough is enough! Forget the laity! Where is the Church's unequivocal voice crying out against this carnage?" And thus the appeal of those few voices held out in relief, including that of Dorothy Day.

I regret this meandering, and will now attempt to describe my first actual encounter with Dorothy. As someone then living in the First Street house, I was a "newbie" on duty, attempting to put into practice manual labor, so central to the philosophy of Dorothy and her teacher, Peter Maurin: I was mopping the kitchen floor. She came in with her long-time comrade and aide-de-camp of sorts, that Brooklyn Lithuanian, Stanley Vishnewski. On recognizing her I experienced a queasiness in the pit of my stomach, a flutter combined with the shaking of my knees. I recall her, a tall, slightly stooped figure with a cane, in a dark coat, a kerchief over her head, and a shoulder bag. She and the taller Stanley, he in a beret and balmacaan raincoat,

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made their way to a bench in front of the window. “Who’s that?” she queried Stanley in a commanding tone. Since this was her first time back in the city following my arrival, she had no idea, nor did Stanley, who I was. So I put down the mop and walked toward the front of the room, stating a few of my details—name, where I was from, etc. On hearing that I was from Cleveland, the first question she asked was, “Do you know the Gauchats?” I said no (although, as founders of Our Lady of the Wayside in Avon, Ohio, that would happen later), but then I



Dorothy Day, dining room table, Catholic Worker farm, Tivoli, NY, ca 1970.

told her that my father had been in the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU), and that my uncle, a priest, was ACTU’s Cleveland chaplain before it became defunct. Adding that we had a photo of my dad in front of the Blessed Martin de Porres House in Cleveland, she rejoined, “Well then, you’re a second generation Catholic Worker!” What a wonderful way to have met Dorothy Day, a splendid gift for the young person I was, from one who did not demean, condescend, or offer anything less than parity—despite the difference in our ages and stations in life.

If I recall correctly, our pleasantries to one another did not extend too much longer; coming in from a journey, Dorothy was often eager to go to her third floor room at St Joseph House. This was the beginning of many moments of grace that I was privileged to have with “Miss Day,” as some among the CW community, especially the most vulnerable ones, would only dare to call her. Let it be said, however, that she did not encourage such formalities, or the adulation that often attends a person of her stature. Some found it hard to believe that one who could surely hold her own in conversation, was often a shy, self-effacing person, intimidated by public speaking, more at home with the small group that encircled a table. And it was round such a table that Dorothy Day would bless the food in front of her and pray part of a Psalm refrain, “taste and see how good the Lord is.”

We traveled to England and Ireland together the first full year that I was at the Catholic Worker. She found flying difficult, joking that “they plied you with liquor in case the plane went down.” She had a great capacity to laugh at herself and diminish the darkness around her through constant prayer and a spirit of child-like openness. Her love of music, good literature and the wonder of the natural world sprang from her palpable love for God. I could go on, and I am now among the ranks of those who do not know when to stop their engagement with Dorothy

Day. It is difficult to assess the effect that someone has on you, someone you’ve thought of every day for the last almost thirty-six years of your life. Is it obsessive? Way out of proportion? Or is it rightful recognition afforded a holy person, mysteriously still present among us, an example to spur us on in our quest for perfection?

I know one thing: there is much that will continue to be said about Dorothy Day, not only by those who knew her “in the flesh,” but on into the present age, by all who meet her spiritually, through her writings and other media, her personal accounts of conversion, discovery of faithful pilgrimage—that long loneliness whose only solution is found in love and community. And yet no matter how we meet her, she invites us along, not to fixate on her, not to reduce her and us to a deified cult of personality, but to point us toward the God of us all. And if our journey seems too arduous, Dorothy Day reminds us, in the words of St Catherine of Siena, that “all the way to heaven is heaven.”

As a layperson, Dorothy did not believe that you had to wait for permission from the hierarchy to do the works of mercy. Yet we do a disservice to her and to the Catholic Worker to construe that statement as an arrogant posture. I have known few who have loved the Church more than its faithful servant Dorothy Day, who wanted to help bring it to its fullest capacity as a beacon in dark times. And she never wanted to be separated from her Church or the poor to whom she dedicated her life. How pleased she would be to hear of a pope who wants the same, a church not only for the poor, but a church that is also poor. May the Catholic Worker, inspired by Dorothy Day, always be willing to witness in our streets on behalf of justice and peace. And may it always break bread in its houses of hospitality, with those who have none but us to call family and friend.

(Cont'd from p. 5)

- Help organize a "reading circle" to learn about the life of Dorothy Day. There could be any number of books chosen. One option would be to start off with one book and read a few chapters each to discuss. Another, more ambitious project would be to pick six books and have a monthly meeting to discuss in September, October, November, January, February and March.
- Schedule a media presentation to spark a conversation and stimulate dialogue. For suggestions of both book and media resources, refer "to learn more" on the Guild's website.
- Sometime in November, near the date of Dorothy Day's birth on November 8th or her death on November 29th, schedule some form of public prayer for world peace (a rosary, for example). Pass out prayer cards to recite at the end.
- Schedule a prayer service using the Dorothy Day/Peter Maurin Chaplet composed by Bob Waldrop from the Oscar Romero Catholic Worker, www.justpeace.org/cwchaplet.htm.
- Arrange for a guest speaker to make a special presentation. For example, speakers listed on the Dorothy Day Canonization Support Network (www.DorothyDaySaint.org) need only their travel expenses covered. They are generally even willing to stay over as a guest in someone's home to reduce expenses.
- Consider reaching out to other parishes, eventually becoming a representative to the entire diocese.

And let the Guild hear from you about your efforts! We'd love to learn about and share your experiences and ideas in newsletters to come.

For someone who embraced voluntary poverty, Dorothy once wryly observed that she had to spend a lot of her time thinking and worrying about money. Even houses of hospitality have bills to pay. "Pray and pay," the printer once scrawled on an invoice. Pray she and her fellow Workers did; when funds or provisions were low, they would "petition" St. Joseph, piling unpaid bills in front of his statue.

The Guild too experiences the irony of upholding this saint of the poor and having to worry about the cost of doing so. (The "Saintly Matters" column in the Summer 2016 newsletter, available on the Guild's website, discussed this seeming paradox.)

We count on your faithful support as Guild members. Please, if it is time to renew your annual membership, take the time now to do so (form below). And ask others to join! Members will receive hard copies of the newsletter.

Also, in light of anticipated new expenses—to be incurred when the cause advances and formally enters the "Roman" phase—we ask you to kindly consider an additional donation, over and above membership. You may recall that last year in November, we mailed a special "appeal" letter. This year we decided to simply ask directly for your help here, through the newsletter. After all, Dorothy always appealed directly to her readers: dare we be so bold in this regard to follow her example?

It is more than just Catholic lore that New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral was built by the pennies of the masses of the immigrant poor. An apt metaphor for the kind of fundraising "campaign" we need to generate (and the only one that seems appropriate): a little from a lot, where even (and especially!) the widow's mite is meaningful. And always, you know you have our deep gratitude.

In Our Time

Editor, Carolyn Zablotsny
Copy Editor, Patrick Jordan
Graphic Designer, Mary Jo Place via the Sisters of St. Joseph, Springfield, MA
Calligrapher, Linda Henry Orell
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To Contact:
 c/o Dorothy Day Guild
 1011 First Avenue, Room 787
 New York, NY 10022
 E-mail: cjzablotsny@gmail.com
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

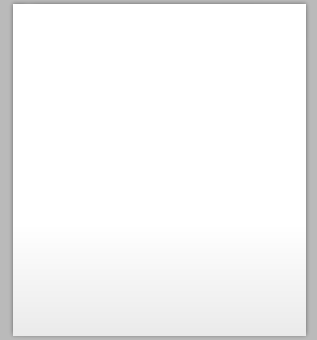
Address

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, office volunteer, arranging educational events.

Dorothy Day Guild
1011 First Avenue, Room 787
New York, NY 10022
www.dorothydayguild.org



WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BE
SAINTS, AND WE MIGHT AS WELL
GET OVER OUR BOURGEOIS FEAR
OF THE NAME. WE MIGHT ALSO
GET USED TO RECOGNIZING THE
FACT THAT THERE IS SOME OF THE
SAINT IN ALL OF US. INASMUCH
AS WE ARE GROWING, PUTTING OFF
THE OLD MAN AND PUTTING ON
CHRIST, THERE IS SOME OF THE SAINT,
THE HOLY, THE DIVINE RIGHT THERE.
DOROTHY DAY