

Manna Is Sometimes Rabbits

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: An appeal for funds to pay bills and buy food. Describes those who are fed as Ambassadors of Christ. (DDLW #909).

“All you that thirst, come to the waters: and you that have no money make haste, buy and eat. Come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without any price. Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which doth not satisfy you? Hearken diligently to me, and eat that which is good and your soul shall be delighted in fatness.” – Isaiah 55:1,2.

Dear Fellow Workers:

In our exuberance we cry out such invitations, and the lame, the halt, and the blind crowd to our doors, as who wouldn't?

This morning the mail contained a little box with a pair of baby shoes in it. One of the Maryknoll Sisters down the street gave us some good big house dresses. Tony, next door, sent us a dozen loaves of sandwich bread, and Tony on the corner has let our grocery bill go up to five hundred dollars.

Katie, who sells us vegetables on the corner, realizes how broke we are right now and gave us four bushels of string beans last night. It is taking hours to string them, but it's good food for the “line,” for the Ambassadors of Christ. They are with us in the morning, about a hundred and fifty of them, for bread and coffee, and again in the afternoon at 4:30. And the line is getting longer. They are here off and on during the day for clothes, socks, coats, shirts, pants, as ragged a crew of Benedict Joseph Labres as anyone would wish to see. Our back yard is packed every afternoon, and when it rains, the halls are full.

And it isn't only a line of men who come. There are quite a few families who need help. And regularly. (We know one man in the City of Brotherly Love who has fourteen children of his own who sends ten dollars a week to another family in need.) There is a little old lady with cancer of the face who sits on the steps of the church to beg who needs to have her rent paid. Yes, she could be cared for in an institution, but if a hint of such a thing reaches her she runs away and sleeps in doorways overnight.

We know that the Lord will help us. He cares for us, St. Peter says simply. But we don't expect Him to send us food as He did to Daniel, by the hands of Habacuc, the prophet, or by the ravens, or by the widow women of Sarephta, or by the small boy with the loaves and fishes. But in some such manner the food will come* and the money to pay our bills. We can only let you know of our needs as we have done for the past twelve years, spring and fall, and beg your help.

We love to do this on some great feast like that of the Little Flower, who wishes to spend her Heaven doing good upon earth. The Psalmist says: I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered: because I forgot to eat my bread. And sometimes food is just the thing that would comfort the heart which in its sadness has forgotten to eat its bread. I'm sure the little St. Therese would approve of such a little way, such a simple way to comfort and help people, so in her name we beg you to help us to help.

Gratefully in Christ,

DOROTHY DAY

*P.S.: As I finished this letter, a woman reader who works in a laboratory where foods are tested called us up and offered us twelve white rabbits, the least weighing seven pounds!