

Mid-Winter

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: An editorial reaffirming the Mystical Body where suffering or glory for one is shared by all. Notes suffering in Mexico, Spain, and Russia. Says the Catholic Manifesto is the Sermon on the Mount and the remedy is the practice of the physical and spiritual works of mercy. Change begins in our hearts. (DDLW #925).

It is a cold night and we are writing in the kitchen where there are no draughts. Barbara, our co-operative apartment baby, sits on her mother's lap by the table and she, too, is writing an editorial though she is only five months old. In her zeal she tries first to eat the pencil her fond mother has given her, and then the paper.

On the wall there are three pictures which attract her attention. She calls out to them, trying to crow. There is a Polish Madonna, a Negro Madonna and a picture of a Madonna and a worker by Ade Bethune. She likes that best of all.

Teresa is drawing pictures, too, and when she shows them to the baby, Barbara laughs and makes bubbles. The black cat lies in restful abandon in front of the stove.

It is one of those rare evenings when there are no visitors, when the work of the day seems to be over, though it is only seven-thirty. It is a good time to sit and write editorials. An editorial, for instance, on charity. St. Saviour's High School and Cathedral High School sent down so many baskets of food, including hams and canned goods, potatoes and all the trimmings for Christmas dinners, that the office was piled high for at least three hours until they were all distributed.

It is true it did not take long to distribute them, there is such need around here.

There were toys, too, dolls for the girls, and other toys for the boys, all beautifully wrapped and be-ribboned.

Bundles of clothes came in, including many overcoats, and they went out as fast as they came in. They came in response to the story of the man who had to accept a woman's woolen sweater in lieu of underwear or overcoat. I hope they keep coming in.

I'd like to have everyone see the poor worn feet, clad in shoes that are falling apart, which find their way to THE CATHOLIC WORKER office. A man came in this rainy morning and when he took off one dilapidated rag of footwear, his sock had huge holes in the heel and was soaking wet at that. We made him put on a dry sock before trying on the pair of shoes we found for him, and he changed diffidently, there under the eye of the Blessed Virgin on the bookcase, looking down from her shrine of Christmas greens. But his poor, red feet were clean. Most of the men and women who come in from the lodging houses and

from the streets manage cleanliness, what with the public baths. I heard of one man who washed his underwear in the public baths, and sat there as long as he could in that steam-laden, enervating atmosphere until it was not quite too wet to put on. For the rest, it could dry on his skin. Not a pleasant thought in bitter weather.

Our prayer for the new year is that “the members might be mutually careful one for another. And if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it.”

It would seem, however, that the glory comes only through suffering this present day when we look upon the Mystical Body reviled and assaulted in Mexico, Spain, Russia, not to speak of the physical suffering of the poor all over the world.

WE REPEAT—

The only immediate remedy is the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. When asked what is the program of THE CATHOLIC WORKER by those who are interested in political action, legislation, lobbying, class war, we reply—It is the program set forth by Christ in the Gospels. The Catholic Manifesto is The Sermon on the Mount. And when we bring THE CATHOLIC WORKER into the streets and public squares, and when we picket the Mexican consulate, it is to practice the spiritual works of mercy—to instruct the ignorant and to comfort the afflicted.

Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. There is no use looking for a revival in business, a return of prosperity, until the hearts and minds of men be changed. If we wish for a program, let us look into our own hearts. The beginning is there.