

Love Is A Warming Fire

Dorothy Day

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Summary: Appeals for help to continue the works of mercy at the Catholic Worker houses and farms which is a reflection of God's love for us. Says the ideal is that every parish have a mutual aid center. (DDLW #676).

Dear Friends in Christ:

Once again we are appealing to our brothers, our readers, our fellow-workers who are so close to us through these years of our association. The ideal of course, is for each one of us, personally, to practice the works of mercy; or for the St. Vincent de Paul society in each parish to do so. The ideal would be for a mutual aid center in each parish to help neighbors with food, clothing, shelter, and services such as nursing, caring for children, doing the wash, painting drab homes—a kind of work camp for energetic Christians. Lacking these centers, it always comes back to what each one of us personally can do, as a family; but houses are small, other members of the family may not be united in this attitude. And that is why our readers send us help to do what we can, we who are writing about those things.

Pope Pius XII said in an address to a group of nuns a few years ago, that one must never be afraid to run into debt to help those in need. And our Lord said, “To him who asks of thee, give; and from him who would borrow of thee, do not turn away.”

We are unprofitable servants, and it is a hard thing to keep writing these appeals twice a year for keeping up our houses, in which we seem to have settled down in the comfort which comes from the work of a community. The best reason for keeping our houses and farms going is the picture they present of the love men can have for one another, the help they give one another, the camaraderie, the dispelling of loneliness and lovelessness, and above all, the providence of God, His loving care of us. “Cast your care upon the Lord, for He has care of you.” Literally, he has shown it, these last twenty-one years. No matter how high the price of living gets, we continue to house a hundred people, counting the two farms, and feed them, in addition to a line of two or three hundred people twice a day. A tremendous amount of clothing is distributed. And a big bill runs up for food and fuel. Our modest comfort comes quite as much from Larry's painting, and Hattie's curtaining the house, and Rose's cleaning, and Veronica's nursing and mending, as from the fuel and clothes. Love is a warming fire, too.

This work came about because we started writing of the love man should have for his brother, in order to show his love for God. It's the only way he can know he loves God.

The main thing, of course, is love even to the folly of the Cross. In the book of Osee the picture of God's love is the picture of a prophet loving his harlot wife, and supporting not only her but her lovers. What foolish love, what unjudging love! And the picture of God's love in the New Testament is of Christ, our Brother, dying for us on the Cross, for us who are ungrateful, undeserving. Let us love God, since He first loved us. And let us show our love for God by our love for our brothers.

Our houses are full, there is sickness and suffering aplenty in our midst. Our job seems to be just to keep on, to be faithful to the work we have started to do, and which we so often do so poorly. And we need your help for it. So we ask again, knowing we shall receive. God has care of us, through you. We ask our Lady and Therese, and Francis, and all the Guardian Angels too, to bless you this Month of the Rosary.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

DOROTHY DAY.