

## Security

**By Dorothy Day**

*The Catholic Worker*, Jul-Aug 1935, p. 4

*Summary: Summary: A passionate rejection of the false security of wages and the maxim "Be moderate, be prudent." Instead she promotes the counsels and precepts of the gospel in this time of world-wide crisis for religion and poverty. She asks, "What right has any one of us to have security when God's poor are suffering?" (DDLW #939).*

## Security

\*\*\*\*Christ told Peter to put aside his nets and follow him. He told the rich young man to sell what he had and give to the poor and follow Him. He said that those who lost their lives for His sake should find them. He told people to take no thought for the morrow. He told his followers that if anyone begged for their coats to give up their cloaks too. He spoke of feeding the poor, sheltering the homeless, visiting those in prison and sick and also of instructing the ignorant. He said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me." He said, "Be ye therefore perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect."

But the usual comment is: "You must distinguish between counsel and precept. You forget that He said also 'All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given.' 'He that can take it let him take it'."

Paul Claudel said that young people have a hunger for the heroic, and too long have they been told, "Be moderate, be prudent."

Too long have we had moderation and prudence. Today is a time of crisis and struggle. Within our generation, Russia has rejected Christianity, Germany has rejected it, Mexico fights to exterminate it, in Spain religious orders have been expelled, in Italy Fascism has exalted the idea of the State and rejecting the Kingship of Christ, has now a perverted idea of authority. Here in the United States the President on the one hand ignores the simpering approval our Ambassador to Mexico has placed on the persecution of the Catholic Church there, and is busy experimenting to find "a way out" of our economic ruin.

## We Oppose the Wage System

In this present situation when people are starving to death because there is an over-abundance of food, when religion is being warred upon throughout the world, our Catholic young people still come from schools and colleges and talk about looking for security, a weekly wage.

They ignore the counsels of the gospels as though they never heard of them, and those who are troubled in conscience regarding them speak of them as being impractical.

Why they think that a weekly wage is going to give them security is a mystery. Do they have security on any job nowadays? If they try to save, the bank fails; if they invest their money, the bottom of the market drops out. If they trust to world practicability in other words, they are out of luck.

If they sell their labor (see Peter Maurin's essays) they are prostituting the talents God gave them. College girls who work at Macy's – is this what their expensive training was for? – boys who go into business looking for profits – is this what their Catholic principles taught them? – are hovering on the brink of a precipice. They have no security and they know it. The only security comes in following the precepts and counsels of the gospels.

## Members One of Another

If each unemployed nurse went to her pastor and got a list of the sick and gave up the idea of working for wages and gave her services to the poor of the parish, is there not security in the trust that God will provide? This is but one instance of using the talents and abilities that God has given to each one of us.

What right has any one of us to have security when God's poor are suffering? What right have I to sleep in a comfortable bed when so many are sleeping in the shadows of buildings here in the neighborhood of THE CATHOLIC WORKER office? What right have we to food when many are hungry, or to liberty when the Scottsboro boys and Tom Mooney are in jail?

St. Thomas says, "The counsels of perfection are, considered in themselves, expedient for everybody," and he adds charitably, "but owing to the varying dispositions of people there are some for whom they are not expedient because their inclinations do not tend in that direction."

But to those in whose minds these questions are stirring there are those words directed –

"Today if you shall hear my voice, harden not your hearts."

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*This is the true fraternity, which overcame the crimes of the world; it followed Christ, attaining the noble kingdom of Heaven.*

–(From the Gradual for July 9.)