

Another Miracle, Please, St. Joseph!

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: After cataloging the "little miracles" of gifts that arrive just in time—blankets, food, clothes, offer of a moose—she asks for bill money. She rejects business approaches to fund raising and says their method comes from the gospel and the "importunity" suggested. They trust they will receive. (DDLW #937).

Another Miracle, Please, St. Joseph

Our lives are made up of little miracles day by day. That splendid globe of sun, one street wide, framed at the foot of East Fourteenth street in early morning mists that greeted me this morning in my way out to mass was a miracle that lifted up my heart. I was reminded of a little song of Teresa's, composed and sung at the age of two.

"I'll sing a song," (she warbled)
Of sunshine on a little house.
And the sunshine is a present for the little house."

Sunshine in the middle of January is indeed a present.

We get presents, lots of them, around THE CATHOLIC WORKER office. During the holidays a turkey, a ham, baskets of groceries, five pounds of butter at one fell swoop, plum puddings, flannel nightgowns and doll babies, sheets, wash rags and blankets descended on us. There was even the offer of a quarter of a moose from Canada, but we didn't know where we could put it, so we refused it.

We appealed in our last issue for beds, and eight beds came. Our cooperative apartment for unemployed women is furnished now, and the surplus that comes in we will give to unemployed people in the neighborhood.

As I write, a blanket comes in from Houghton and Dutton, Boston, Massachusetts, sender unknown, but one of our Boston subscribers, no doubt. We threatened in the last number to sleep between newspapers and under rugs, but we didn't have a chance. When it was three below we had denuded the house of blankets to the extent of having to use donated overcoats which has just come in, but even this minor mortification was soon denied us.

During this last cold snap one of the girls from the Teresa-Joseph Co-op came in to tell us that they could use four more blankets, and that very afternoon a car drove up to the office and four blankets, beautifully heavy ones, walked in.

And so it goes. Books, food, (two bottles of wine and a box of cigars! and who sent them we wonder) clothes and bedding!

And now we ask St. Joseph for another little miracle. Our cash box is empty. We just collected the last pennies for a ball of twine and stamps and we shall

take a twenty-five cent subscription which just come in to buy a stew for supper. But the printing bill, the one hundred and sixty-five dollars of it which remains unpaid, confronts us and tries to intimidate us.

But what is \$165 to St. Joseph or to St. Teresa of Avila either. We refuse to be affrighted. (Though of course the printer may be, oh he of little faith!)

Don Bosco tells lots of stories about needing this sum or that sum to pay rent and other bills with and the money arriving miraculously on time. And he too was always in need, always asking, and always receiving.

A great many of our friends urge us to put our business on a business like basis. But this isn't a business, it's a movement. And we don't know anything about business around here anyway. Well-meaning friends say, –“But people get tired of appeals.” We don't believe it. Probably most of our friends live as we do, from day to day and from hand to mouth, and as they get, they are willing to give. So we shall continue to appeal and we know that the paper will go on.

It's a choice of technique after all. People call up offering us the services of their organizations to raise money. They have lists, they send out telephone and mailed appeals. They are business-like and most coldly impersonal. Though they may be successful in raising funds for Jewish, Catholic and Protestant organizations and offer us several thousand a week, minus their commission, we can't warm up to these tactics. We learn ours from the Gospels and what's good enough for Sts. Peter and Paul is good enough for us. Their technique of revolution was the technique of Christ, and it's the one to go back to.

And as for getting tired of our appeals, Jesus advocated importunity, thus:

“Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him, friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have not what to set before him. And he from within should answer and say, trouble me not, the door is now shut and my children are with me in bed and I cannot rise and give thee. Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend; yet because of his *importunity* he will arise and give him as many as he needeth.”

So our friends may expect us to importune and to continue to ask, trusting that we shall receive.