

Look Upon The Face of Christ

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: An unusual midsummer appeal for help. Notes the destitution around them and hopes the "importunity" of their request will be heard. (DDLW #457).

LOOK UPON THE FACE OF THY CHRIST

Midsummer.

DEAR Fellow Workers in Christ:

Blessed are the poor, Christ said, and now we are very poor. Not as poor in spirit as we should be but poor with bills hanging over us, and so many coming with confidence in you, our readers, to be fed. We know you have many calls made on you, from Europe, from Asia, from all over the world, but there are our own veterans, wounded morally, mentally, spiritually, and our veterans of the class war, with their ruptures, amputated fingers, legs, – sick brains, sick bodies, sick souls.

There is no end to the needs in work like ours. People go on eating. Meals come around with appalling regularity. The work in the kitchen goes on during the long hot summer. The bread line is long again. It is the very visitors who come in leaving us a bit of their vacation money who are helping us to keep going. And of course the vegetables from Maryfarm at Newburgh.

People say, you can't really realize how terrible this is, this Destitution. In a way, yes, you do get used to it. It is terrible to admit it, but you do. The first time I saw a bread line with its homeless ones, footsore, wrapped in rags, my heart turned over within me.

"You have wounded my heart, my love.: Jesus Christ Himself said,"I have no place to lay my head." One of the most pointed stories he told of the poor was that of Lazarus sitting at the door of Dives, waiting for Crumbs. We are all Dives in a way.

And what if it is their own fault, these poor? What about the story of the prodigal son? How the Father loved him and welcomed him! We can only show our love for Christ by our love for these his least ones. Our food isn't much. We haven't many clothes to give out. But we can keep trying to show our love, by keeping St. Joseph's house and the breadline going.

This is an extra appeal, a midsummer appeal, a real call for help to meet our bills. So please think of us as your good friends who knock on your door unseasonably perhaps; but even though like in the Bible story you are comfortably in bed with your children (a cozy slum-like picture these hot nights) you will hear our importunity and open to share what you have.

In the name of Mary,