

From The Mailbag

Dorothy Day

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Summary: Highlights from letters from those connected to the Catholic Worker community. She extols their hard work and struggles. (DDLW #677).

It is so hard to print letters in full that once in a while we will try to give our readers a sample of our mail by synopsisizing some of the letters we receive during the course of the month.

From Ernest Lundgren: He and Hans Tunnesen are busy working at St. Joseph's Farm, Cape May Courthouse, taking jobs on the side painting and carpentering, and using the money to build up the house and outbuildings which they eventually hope to be another little retreat house like Maryfarm, especially for families who will come weekends and camp out around the place in tents and trailers and what outbuildings they can put up. This is a fine team to work together, both of them ex-seamen, one a Swede, one a Norwegian, both converts. They drive up often to Peter Maurin Farm for Sunday dinner.

From Andy Spillane, another seaman who goes round the world on the S.S. President Monroe, and keeps us informed as to his whereabouts with postals which the children and all of us love. At present he is in Bombay and will go from there to Karachi, to Pakistan, to the Suez Canal and to Europe. He tells of sitting at a little café watching the world go by. "Outside the door all the cooking is done in the open in little pots. Of course they are poor people, in congested slums, it's a sad sight everywhere, and it's the same nearly everywhere else."

T. Ryah, 156 Durham Rd. Sparkhill, Birmingham 11, England, tells of a Guild of Catholic Paper Sellers, under the patronage of the English Martyrs, approved by His Lordship Bishop Bright. "This is a lay Guild composed at the moment of professional men and factory workers, working in their spare time, knocking at doors, selling on the streets, at meetings held in the public squares, outside factories, in fact, anywhere crowds gather, not omitting outside church doors after each Mass. A mention in your own paper would be appreciated as we wish to extend the Guild."

M. Ellanor Drouin of Biddeford sends us a wonderful article from **Worship** about Cardinal Lercaro of Bologna, who said when he came to his new diocese three years ago, "I was born poor, I have lived poor, and everything I have is

yours." And he added, "Woe to me, if one day I should go to bed without being worn out by exhaustion." From Ravenna where he had been bishop, he brought along five boys, waifs whom he had personally rescued from the Po river flood and whom he had given a home in his own bishops' palace. He now has twelve more and they sit at the same table with him, and he helps them with their lessons at night. (At St. Vincent's hospital the other day I saw a blind Indian boy whom our own Cardinal Spellman brought back with him from India some time ago for special treatment here.)

From Mario and Estelle Carota and all the Carota family at 2627 Haste St., Berkeley, Calif. They had just moved back into the city from their Agnus Dei Farm at Aptos, with their thirteen children. They don't like the city, but they cannot support themselves on the land yet. They are still hoping to get a family industry going. They are living right now in an old sorority house which has seven bedrooms, and they tell me there is room on the parlor couch for me when I come west to visit. They have great praise for the Christian Family Movement, and the particular branch they are speaking of is made up of Mexicans and Negroes and the chaplain is Fr. Garcia. "He is a wonderful priest and works with the minority groups in this country. Mario teaches one night a week catechism to couples about to be married in the church. It is so little for us to do when Father has so many couples asking for instruction that he could use three other priests, plus lots of lay help. He has no rectory, he visits and says Mass now at labor camps, as does Fr. McCullough all the year round. Fr. Garcia's little book is filled with appointments with families which he is always on the fly to keep. As I write, Mario is developing pictures for a poem he is writing in pictures about the family. If he ever finishes it I will send you a copy. Carrol McCool of St. Collette House in Oakland came for a short visit and he says he gets discouraged with the system but just keeps going which is very edifying to us."

From Arthur and Emilia Vigil, who are part of a lay missionary group in Mexico are working with two other families, all of whom are working with Fr. Donald Hessler, Maryknoll priest and his group. Bishop Lane has written of the necessity of whole families entering the mission field. They are more effective than the single apostles since through the children, and through the needs of the family, they reach their brothers among those around them. Anyone interested in helping these families who are giving themselves for three year periods to the mission and need the support of the faithful to keep them there and to provide them with the materials for clinics, cisterns, farming, and other works of mercy write and ask them to send their circular letter from Calle 15 de Septiembre, No. 22, Chatumal, Quintana Roo, Mexico.