House of Hospitality,
Chapter One ==========

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: Engaging vignettes about the daily work of the early depression era movement: helping the evicted, street corner speaking, the impersonal shelters run by the city, and the delightful conversation of children around the office. (DDLW #436).

1

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"'PYTHAGORAS used to divide his disciples' days into three parts: the first was for God and spent in prayer; the second for God and spent in study and meditation; the third for men and the business of life.

"Thus all the first two-thirds of the day were for God.

"'And as a matter of fact, it is in the morning, before the distraction of our intercourse with men, that we must listen to God.

"'But let us be precise. 'What,' you will ask me, 'is the meaning of listening to God? Must I. like the contemplatives of Hindustan, listen to him from dawn to midday with head bent between my hands or with eyes raised to Heaven? What am I to do in reality?'

"Here is my answer. You are to write. . . .

"St. Augustine begins his Soliloquies thus: 'I was a prey to a thousand various thoughts and for many days had been making strenuous efforts to find myself, myself and my own good, and to know the evil to avoid, when on a sudden–was it myself? Was it some other? Was it without or within me? I cannot tell, yet above all things ardently longed to know:–at all events, suddenly it was said to me:"If you find what you are seeking, what will you do with it? To whom will you confide it¿'–"I shall keep it in my memory," answered I.

"But is your memory capable of treasuring up all that your mind has conceived?"–"No, certainly it cannot." "Then you must write."–But how can this be done, seeing that you believe your health unequal to the labor of writing? These things cannot be dictated; they demand the most complete solitude. "That is true; I know not, then, what to do." "Listen! Ask strength, ask help to find what you seek. Then write it, that this offspring of your mind may animate and strengthen you. . . ."'

"Now, I ask you, do you think that these things happen only to St. Augustine?"

–Pere Gratry's The Well-Springs.

But I am a woman, with all the cares and responsibilities of a woman, and though I take these words of Pere Gratry and of St. Augustine to heart, I know that what I write will be tinged with all the daily doings, with myself, my child, my work, my study, as well as with God. God enters into them all. He is inseparable from them. I think of Him as I wake and as I think of Teresa's daily doings. Perhaps it is that I have a wandering mind. But I do not care. It is a woman's mind, and if my daily written meditations are of the people about me, of what is going on,–then it must be so. It is a part of every meditation to apply the virtue, the mystery, to the daily life we lead.

I shall meditate as I have been accustomed, in the little Italian Church on Twelfth Street, by the side of the open window, looking out at the plants growing on the roof, the sweet corn, the boxes of herbs, the geraniums in bright bloom, and I shall rest happy in the presence of Christ on the altar, and then I shall come home and I shall write as Pere****Gratry advises, and try to catch some of these things that happen to bring me nearer to God, to catch them and put them down on paper.

It is something I have wanted to do, which I have done sketchily for some years. Usually I have kept a notebook only when I am sad and need to work myself out of my sadness. Now I shall do it as a duty performed joyfully for God.

And because I am a woman involved in practical cares, I cannot give the first half of the day to these things, but must meditate when I can, early in the morning and on the fly during the day. Not in the privacy of a study–but here, there and everywhere-at the kitchen table, on the train, on the ferry, on my way to and from appointments and even while making supper or putting Teresa to bed.

2

We have begun. The first and second issues of *The Catholic Worker*are off the press. Peter's constant indoctrination, his simple program of life has caught hold, on my life at least. All winter he came to us as a teacher. John and his wife, Teresa and I, were living together for this past year: now their baby is born, John has a job editing a paper in Dobbs Ferry and they have moved up there. Thinking of Peter's "voluntary poverty" as the foundation of the new work I am undertaking, I gave them most of the furniture and there remains only a bed, a table and two chairs. The two front rooms with the table and two chairs are the offices; the bedroom has nothing but the bed in it. A Communist truck driver around the corner who is in the moving business is bringing me in a file case and desk today. We possess one typewriter, which belongs to my assistant.

Teresa is spending most of the summer on my sister's farm and I am free for work. Already I have assistance, as before the second issue of the paper was off the press, Dorothy Weston came in and volunteered her services. She lives uptown but a good part of the time she spends her nights down here. She likes to work half the night.

Peter has returned for the past few months to the camp up the Hudson where he has been working for the past seven years, studying and writing and sleeping in a shack and living on a few dollars a week. He will come down for occasional round-table discussions and street speaking, but he is an agitator, not an editor, and his job will be to speak and to write.

3

It is another hot day and people go about gleaming in the sun, walking slowly as though to move were a feat in endurance. Children sit on the front steps with nothing on but a rag to cover them. Women return from markets with laden shopping bags, fruit, salads, hot weather vegetables, walking as though they were half asleep. Even at six-thirty when I go out to Mass there is a heavy haze in the air.

But the little yard back of the office is cool and fresh because Mrs. Riedel hoses it first thing in the morning and mops down the back steps. The petunias and four o'clocks are in bloom–the gorgeous cerise color the Mexican****Indians so love and which they use in their serapes****and woven rugs and chairs and baskets. The fig tree has little figs on it and the wild cucumber vine in the 14th Street yard across the way is spilling over the fence. There is a breeze out here and it is pleasant to have early morning coffee and the paper outside.

It is one of the compensations of poverty to have such a garden. In the front the street is slummish. At night one walks warily to avoid the garbage that is hurled out of the windows in sacks. There are odors, foul odors often, out in front. I will not be so realistic as to more than hint at them. But out behind the house there is the fresh green smell of growing things.

One bathes in a white tub next to the kitchen sink, and one is thankful that it is indeed a white tub instead of two slate wash tubs with the panel between removed. It is the only white tub in the house and the snobbish landlord put it in, in consideration of the fact that the tenants who lived here before used to live in Tudor City. Poor things, to have to move from Tudor City down to East 15th Street. But there are smells up there too. We were out walking last spring and exploring down below the arrogant heights and we were delighted to be assailed by the stockyard smells of a slaughter house. "Delighted," I say? That is class-war to be delighted at some slight sharing of the rich in the miseries of the poor. But I must admit my delight and hug it to me. I do penance, through my nose continually.

Yes, I have a white bath tub, but the toilet is in the hall, and since I don't possess a kimono and since I also possess a sense of modesty, I have to dress to go out there. (I suppose my sense of modesty will be questioned for having mentioned the place.) Even so, I must greet Mr. Rubino, or pause to gossip with Mrs. Riedel as I go in or out. Some more penance. But these are little things.

Joe Calderon called up this morning. “This is Operator 78960,” he said mysteriously with his betraying Brooklyn accent. “Calling to report that this noon I am speaking down at Wall Street again, and that I can’t get up to the office to get bundles of *The Catholic Worker*because I’m already laden down with my stand. Did I tell you I made a nice stand with metal legs? It can’t break. I can’t fall off–yes, I suppose I can fall off, but I’ll be careful.”

“Don’t be too careful,” I urged him. “Your exuberance is catching.”

Joe fell off his soap-box the first time he spoke some time ago, and just lately he fell through it. It was borrowed from a Socialist too, but the Socialist was a good fellow and didn’t mind. So now there is a specially constructed stand with metal legs. Joe has worked in an office on the Stock Exchange for the last five years and after work has gone over to the downtown Fordham school to take classes in scholastic philosophy, economics and sociology. He is a handsome boy, with a big mouth and when he gets excited he talks out of the side of it. His friend Anthony Ullo, also an Italian, is quieter, more reserved, and very determined. They are both very young.

“You see, we believe in the motions of the Holy Spirit,” he explained. "And I think that Catholics ought to stand up for the social doctrine of the Church and tell people about it. They need to be told.

"I’m really a convert in a way. We’re Italians and naturally Catholics, but I never had any interest in the Church until I was eighteen. Then a teacher in high school where I was going persuaded me to go over and see Sister Peter Claver whom you mentioned in the first number of *The Catholic Worker*as being one of the first subscribers. She’s a wonderful women! She can sit and listen to whatever you have to say by the hour, and then she’ll tell you to come back again and tell her some more. The first thing you know, you find yourself going to Mass, and helping out in the boys’ clubs in the parish.

"It was the same way with my friend Tony. We weren’t friends before though we were in the same parish. He used to go around with the Italians and I used to go with the Jews. So we hadn’t gotten together. And then Sister Peter Claver was making a census of the district and she came across him mending his bicycle. They started to talk and she told him to drop around to see her, and she did with him just as she did with me. She just listened. She told him to come back and she went on listening. She’s a wonderful person.

"She gave us books to read too. Did you ever read *The Reality of God*and *Religion and Agnosticism*by Baron von Hugel? Or *The Mystical Elements of R*eligion? Between Sister Peter Claver and those books I found myself back in the Church.

“Tony was taking law and he works down on Wall Street too. Having a half an hour for lunch we decided we’d begin soap-boxing during our lunch period. He takes fifteen minutes and I take the other fifteen.”

To get permission to speak, Calderon went around to the police captain and told

him what he wanted to do. The Captain himself has boys at Fordham and he gave Joe the period from one to one-thirty, taking half an hour from the Socialist to do it.

"And was he sore!" Joe said.

Still, he lent them his soap-box.

"His name is Klein, and his mother is Irish, and he says he was a Catholic until he was nine years old and that then he saw the light Can you beat that? But he's listening to us. In our talks we are following Cronin's *Science of Ethics.*Last Tuesday we started our talks by giving a summary of Father Parsons' *Modern Mind and the Church. You*read it, didn't you? How the disorder is caused by the world losing its organic unity and man his****interior unity; how ethics are divorced from business, politics and education; how the Church, the state and the family are working at cross purposes; too much stress laid on money-making and profits.... We had a big crowd, two or three hundred–in fact, as many as the street in front of us would hold.

"And then we outlined the subjects of our future talks. We told the people that we were going to begin with the reality of God because God was being denied from the soap-box every place else. We were going to argue His existence from design–that's what we did today–and next time from cause and effect; then the argument from motion and finally, the argument of the common consent of mankind.

"Then having pointed out that****God is the source and the end of all life, we are going to argue that any government which prevents the attainment of this end can't be accepted,–and that brings us to Communism and Socialism.

4

Yesterday we had callers all day. First a traveling salesman came in who had heard about the paper while on his yearly retreat over at Manresa, Staten Island, where copies of it had been distributed.

We discussed the coal situation and the old Homestead strike and the endless battle of labor for recognition in the coal and steel industries.

Then a high school teacher with her troubles in the Teachers' Union and the obstructionist tactics of the Communists in that organization. The last meeting she attended lasted from one until nine at night, and she without lunch, but they were trying to wear out their opponents, so the Communists kept the floor and talked interminably until those not so fervent were worn down and had to go home and then the vote when it was taken was swung in their favor.

Miss K. told too about teaching in summer school and how one little seven-.year-old boy, a Serbian, came to school at eleven only to fall asleep immediately on his desk. On questioning him she discovered that he worked in a laundry from

seven until ten-thirty every day sorting clothes for twenty-five cents a week! She took the matter up with the school nurse and the employer was brought to court and fined fifty dollars.

But child labor, in spite of laws, still goes on. People are hungry. They themselves conspire with the employer to outwit the Department of Labor inspectors.

Then a red-headed boy came in who said he never had a job since he left school two years ago, and wanted copies of the paper.

Then a member of the Steam-fitters' Union who was passing out handbills calling attention to conditions in the Ebling and Michel Breweries owned by Mr. Rubel (who also has fifty ice plants where he underpays his help), and in Liebman's Brewery, which puts out Rheingold Beer. The handbills are distributed to urge a boycott of these beers. He was going to the Labor Temple that evening, he said, to attend some other union meetings and took fifty copies of *The Catholic Worker*to distribute there.

5

Office hours around here are from eight in the morning until twelve at night. Many visitors come in and always one of us has to be on hand, either Dorothy or I. Little by little we are getting helpers to address our growing mailing list and help us with the truly formidable number of evictions we are asked to handle, not to speak of cooking and cleaning.

Early this morning Dorothy, Tina and I went over to Mrs. N.'s to see about her moving. The marshal was due to come at ten and put her on the street and she didn't want her belongings exposed to the neighborhood. The Unemployed Councils (Communist) are interested in making demonstrations which are a very good thing too, in that they call the attention of the public to the plight of the poor, but most of the time those who are the cause of the demonstrations are much embarrassed. We were afraid they were going to be on hand this morning as they usually show up by the time the furniture gets put on the street, so we wanted to get there early.

With the assistance of two stalwart young fellow workers we got the moving under way. The janitor of the house where Mrs. N. had been living recommended a house down the street where the landlord didn't mind taking Home Relief vouchers.

The hardest thing to move was a giant rubber plant which reached all the way to the ceiling.

Mrs. N. makes her living by collecting rags and old iron from dump heaps and garbage cans and selling them. She used to be a janitress herself and had a comfortable little apartment in return for taking care of two houses down the street. But she lost her job and now she is sixty-two and there is not much

chance of getting anything else. She is all alone save for a huge cat called Rags who is so old he is toothless. When she opened to our knock he was lying on one of the pantry shelves looking on indifferently at all the moving that was going on around him.

For her meals and his, Mrs. N. collects scraps from the First Avenue market, picking up stale vegetables and scraps of meat and fish heads. She does not like to ply her trade of picking rags out of ash cans during the day, so she sets out at night, continuing her work often until early in the morning. Just the night before, the janitress said, she had brought in an iron bed and spring at twelve o'clock, making several trips with them. She had had no bed before, sleeping on a pile of rags in the corner.

Her possessions consisted only of trunks and a couple of large baskets of her belongings, a table and chairs, a kitchen range and some kerosene lamps.

She cooked of course, over a wood fire, even in the hottest weather. She had not been able to afford either gas or electricity.

"But then most of the people around here never use gas or electricity," the janitress said. "I always burn wood myself. I get wood from the Edison people down by the river. They are always giving away free wood. They are awful good."

6

Teresa, aged seven, is very much around the office these first cold days. Since *The Catholic Worker*has moved to the store downstairs, there is ample room for another assistant and her little desk.

She likes even better than sitting at a desk to crawl under the furniture coverings of a set of chairs and sofa the young woman racktender at the Paulist Church sent down as a contribution to our office furniture. There, ensconced in her tent with her little friend Freddy Rubino, I heard her talking the other day.

"There now," she said, "you have committed a mortal sin, and you haven't got God in your heart any more."

Freddy is two years younger than herself. Freddy had a few minutes before kicked his mother in the shins and called her a pig and generally scandalized the neighborhood, though everyone should have been accustomed to witnessing these scenes at least once a day.

Teresa's reproof made Freddy indignant. "He is so there," he insisted. "He's right there."

"No, there's a devil there now."

"I don't want a devil there. I want God there. He is there."

"Well, all you have to do is to say you're sorry and it will be all right."

So that was settled.

Then there was the question of mortal and venial sin. “If you just do it suddenly then it’s not a mortal sin, but if you stop to think and do it anyway, then it is. For instance, if I decide I don’t want to drink any cocoa milk and don’t do it.”

“I wouldn’t be quite so extreme and rigorous,” I told her. “It has to be a serious matter, and I’m sure it’s not serious if you don’t drink your milk. A cow can live on grass so I guess you can live on the amount you eat.”

“What I’d like to live on are cucumbers,” Teresa decided. “Or maybe popcorn with ketchup on it.”

Her ideas about heaven are just as original as her ideas about food. She has it all worked out with her friends in the back yard as to just what sort of mansion she is going to have in heaven. There will be a beach there with horseshoe crabs and spider crabs and a place where she can fish. And there will be no cities but only country places and there will be no quarrels or fights. . . .

For a while the children were playing ghosts and the two younger ones, Freddy and Teresa, were going around scared. Perhaps she was reassuring herself as well as them when I heard her talking out in the kitchen while they played one rainy afternoon.

They were all having a very good time and feeling very peaceful. I didn’t know it then, I was listening, charmed at the angelic dialogue, but I found out afterward that they were mixing soap powder, cocoa and coffee together and making the most delicious little pastries which they were proceeding to cook on an electric grill. It was the peculiar smell which informed me of their doings.

The conversation proceeded thus:

“There are no ghosts. Really there aren’t,” said Teresa.

“But there are spirits,” the little girl from upstairs said.

“God is a Spirit and that’s enough,” Teresa decided.

I was reminded of a story Mother Clark up at the Cenacle of St. Regis had told me of a little girl who was being instructed for her first Holy Communion. They were asking her what a spirit was and when she could not answer they started asking her questions.

“Has a spirit got eyes or hair?”

“Has a spirit arms or legs?” And so on.

She agreed that a spirit had none of these things but she finally said brightly:

"But a spirit has feathers!”

Thank God****for Pope Pius X who urged early Communion. He was the one who said that it was sufficient for a child to know the difference between her daily food and the heavenly food she would receive.

I know that if anyone started asking Teresa any questions she would not be able to answer them. She has an aversion to answering questions. My only knowledge of her spiritual processes is through her conversations, either with other children or with me. She will volunteer information, but she will not have it drawn from her by direct questioning.

There was an article in the *Journal of Religious Instruction* recently about a series of questions asked twenty-five children of Teresa's age and their answers.

I tried out the questions on Teresa and she only scratched her head and acted irritated. Her answers were barely adequate.

And yet when I hear her talk, hear her wise little comments on things I say, I feel certain as to her spiritual knowledge.

About prayer, for instance, Freddy said that he did not know how to pray. Questioned by Teresa, he said that he merely repeated prayers after his mother. All he had to do to pray was to think every now and then of God, Teresa told him. "Just remember Him," she said. "Like after I go to Communion in the morning, then lots of times during the day I suddenly remember that I did, I suddenly remember that I've got God. That's a prayer, too."

7

A deer gets trapped on a hillside and every effort is brought to bear to rescue him from his predicament. The newspapers carry daily features.

Mrs. A. with her four children and unemployed husband living on $1.50 a week, is trapped by economic circumstances and everyone is so indifferent that it took three or four afternoons of Mike Gunn's time to see to it that the Home Relief came to the rescue. Though Mike has enough to do with his Labor Guild over in Brooklyn, he was doing his bit as part of our Fifteenth Street Neighborhood Council.

Three little pigs are crowded into a too-small cage, the case is brought into court, the judge's findings in the case being that pigs should not be crowded the way subway riders are. And a family of eight children, mother and father, are crowded in three rooms and the consensus of opinion is that they're lucky to have that and why don't they practice birth control anyway.

One of the Home Relief Workers came in the other day and was voicing just such sentiments. She was absolutely unacquainted with Catholic teaching on birth control and abortion, and we talked on the subject. Though we may not have convinced her, we at least served the purpose, we hope, of toning down her propaganda among unemployed families.

A scavenger hunt is the latest game of "Society." A hilarious pastime, the *New York Times*society reporter calls it, and describes in two and one half columns the asinine procedure of several hundred society and literary figures, guests at

a party at the Waldorf-Astoria, surging forth on a chase through the highways and byways of Manhattan Island. "The scavengers' hunt of last night brought an enthusiastic response even from persons whose appetites for diversion are ordinarily jaded. The hunt was a search through the city streets for a ridiculously heterogeneous list of articles."

Any morning before and after Mass and straight on through the day there is a "scavenger hunt" going on up and down 15th Street outside the windows of The *Catholic Worker*and through all the streets of the city. People going through garbage and ash cans to see what they can find in the way of a heterogeneous list of articles. The *Times*does not state what these things were but probably the list was made up of something delightfully and quaintly absurd such as old shoes, bits of string, cardboard packing boxes, wire, old furniture, clothing and food.

If the several hundred guests at the Waldorf had to scavenge night after night and morning after morning, the hunt would not have had such an enthusiastic response.

8

Teresa is now a member of the Fifteenth Street Neighborhood Council and took part in her first eviction the other day. She had a cold and was staying home from school in order to keep out in the air, it being a balmy day, so she had her chance to help.

The Friday before, a Home Relief worker from 22nd Street came to the office to get aid for a woman and child who were being evicted from a dark flat in one of the tenements of William Horn (31 Union Square).

There were five stalwart friends of *The Catholic Worker*in the office at the time, Harry Crimmins, Frank O'Donnell, Tom Coddington, William Walsh and a Mr. Powers from Atlantic City who came to inquire about the work of the paper and stayed to help.

Understanding that the eviction was at three in the afternoon, we sallied forth, but when we got there, the landlord's agent had called off his man, expecting us to do the job of putting the woman out, and thus saving him eighteen dollars.

We refused to move the woman's furniture until it had been brought down by the marshal. We explained to the agent that often a landlord who was unwilling to accept a Home Relief voucher, offered to move the family himself, paying five dollars to a neighborhood truckman rather than eighteen to the marshal. This agent stood sneering and scoffing by the door and refused to do anything.

"You have no sympathy for landlords, have you?" he wanted to know.

We assured him that our sympathy was rather with the weaker party. All right then, he would call the marshall The eviction would be the following Monday at three o'clock.

It was hard to understand his unwillingness to have the poor woman moved. It was as though he delighted in the idea of heaping humiliation on her.

Monday came, and the relief worker hastened around to the office, to tell us that the marshal was about to arrive, though it was only one, not three in the afternoon. Only Harry Crimmins, Teresa, Dorothy Weston and I were in the office, so leaving Dorothy to mind the office, the three of us sallied out.

Several police and huskies were standing at the door of the tenement to greet what they thought was going to be a delegation of Communists, only to meet instead seven-year-old Teresa, Harry Crimmins and me. They dissolved into thin air. (It is a wonder they wouldn't stay and help us.)

Teresa carried toys, pieces of the baby's crib, parlor ornaments and dishes, and Harry Crimmins and I managed the rest. The Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart, a community of nuns who run a day nursery and do visiting work in the neighborhood, promised to keep an eye on our evicted friend–she is a Protestant–taking charge of her two-year-old child when she works as a dishwasher for seven dollars a week.

This is only one of the dozen eviction cases we have had in the last month. We have moved Jews, Protestants and Catholics. A German livery stable man loaned us his horse and wagon to move a Jewish neighbor, and Jews, Protestants and Catholics have helped us by contributing clothes, furniture and their services.

9

One afternoon last month we went up to the Municipal Lodging House of the City of New York and looked at the largest bedroom in the world there. The seventeen hundred beds, the eight rows stretching way out to the very end of a pier, two-tiered beds at that, were a grim sight, the collectivization of misery.

The huge vats of stew stirred with a tremendous ladle only emphasized the ugly state which the world is in today. Every night the men stand out on 25th Street in long lines and are hustled through, catalogued, ticketed, stamped with the seal of approval, fed in a rush and passed on to the baths, the doctor, the beds, all with a grim efficiency which gave testimony to the length of time this need has existed for the mass care of the impoverished.

One day last summer, I saw a man sitting down by one of the piers, all alone. He sat on a log, and before him was a wooden box on which he had spread out on a paper his meagre supper. He sat there and ate with some pretense of human dignity, and it was one of the saddest sights I have ever seen.

The attendant who showed us around told of how the lame, the halt and the blind who were being housed at the "muni" were transported in a bus to a place which the Salvation Army runs for such men where they can sit inside all day out of the wind and rain. *But what about Catholic provision for such men?* There is

none. The money which the priests at the Holy Name Mission collected through the years went for immediate relief for homeless and hungry men and they were not able to start the building project for the men which they had been planning. Oh, for parish houses of hospitality

If the largest bedroom in the world was a sad sight the women's dormitory was even sadder. At one end of it there were beds with little cribs by the side of them for women with babies. But women know that if they are forced to accept the hospitality of the city, their older children will be taken from them and only infants left to them, so not many of them go there. Our escort told us of a family which had come in the night before. The family was evicted, and the mother was so sick she had to be carted off to the hospital, and the man, the old grandmother and the three children had to go to the city for relief. The older children were taken to the Children's Aid and the baby left with the grandmother. And what must have been the thoughts of the mother lying in the hospital, wondering where her mother, her children and her husband were spending the night? What but thoughts of hatred and despair that such cruelty and inhumanity can exist today.

(This was written five years ago and last week I paid another visit to the lodging house. Thanks to the Works Progress Administration and the increased amount of money put at their disposal, things have changed for the better. The largest bedroom in the world has been converted into a day shelter for men, where thousands can sit at benches all through the long cold days, playing cards, reading, mending their clothes or just brooding. At the end of the pier there is space partitioned off where men can take showers, have a shave by unemployed barbers, wash and press their clothes, have them mended by unemployed tailors.

Since there are facilities both at 26th Street and South Ferry for the men to stay indoors out of the bad weather, the long lines of men waiting for food are to a great extent done away with. The meals have improved greatly, but complaints of graft are always being made, that those employed by the city sell a lot of the good food provided for the men. Of course, since these charges are made by the men themselves no attention is paid to them.

Since then, too, the women's lodging house has been transferred twice, first to 14th Street, where it occupied three old buildings which were made very comfortable and homelike. Instead of one dormitory there were many smaller rooms with curtains hung at the windows and colored comforters gracing the foot of each bed. The dining room was very attractive and open to all who were in need. One friend of mine who was living on a $2.75 a week food allowance said that she went over there Thanksgiving and Christmas and all she had to do was sign her name on the book before going in to partake of the city's hospitality. She said there was a great spirit of gaiety and cheer. The rumor is that the neighborhood objected to the lodging house. Since then they have moved to 6th Street where they occupy an old building formerly used by the Children's Aid. The women in charge are young and not at all "matronly." There is the same kind spirit. About 150 women can be accommodated. They stay only until

transients can be sent back home, until relatives can be located or until they can be placed on relief. It is a sad thing to see these women and children sitting around all day in the small crowded room on hard benches, waiting hour after hour and not knowing what is going to happen to them.

A Catholic place for women is maintained at St. Zita's on West 14th Street. Here a large laundry provides work for all the women who are taken in. Inasmuch as they are working all day, there is little opportunity for them to get out and try to find other work which will enable them to maintain a home again.

Women in any condition are taken in. On one occasion I was walking across 14th Street and came across an elderly woman who was very drunk. She kept dropping her gloves and her little bundles and falling down when she tried to pick them up.I stopped to help her and she clutched me by the****arm and wanted to know where she could get shelter. St. Zita's was only half a block away so I managed to get her to the door where I rang the bell. A kind little nun immediately took her in with no question. What heroic work to care for these sad and difficult cases! And what Christ-like patience it calls for.

The Salvation Army Home on Rivington Street is a four-story building with a dormitory on each floor. There one must pay twenty-five cents a night for a bed, and God help you if you have five cents less than the required amount. Many of the old women who stay there are able to get a day's work now and then which pays for their room, but they never have enough to pay a week's room rent all at once. There is also an Episcopalian place, St. Barnabas' House, which accommodates about fifty women. And now, of course, there is our House of Hospitality. Ours, of course, is like a large family and when the women come to us they come for an indefinite stay. Some of them have been with us for the past four years. We have no rules, any more than the average family has, and we ask no questions. Many of the women have come to us so exhausted by poverty and insecurity that it has taken them months to recover. There are others who will always be victims of shattered nerves, and incapable of holding down any job. Many of them try to help us and participate in the work around the house. Whatever co-operation they give is voluntary. I love to think of that story of Dostoevsky, *The Honest Thief,*which exemplifies true Christ-like charity. One knows that that is a true story and that incidents like that happen often among the poor.)

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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 14th Street in early morning mists, that greeted me on 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, 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 House of Hospitality 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 zero we had denuded the house of blankets to the extent of having to use donated overcoats which had just come in, but even this minor mortification was soon denied us.

During this last cold snap one of the girls from the apartment 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–were brought in by a chauffeur.

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

But now 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 came in to buy meat for 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 one hundred and sixty-five dollars 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 paper 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 mail

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 St. Peter and St. 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 if 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.