

Fall Appeal - October/November 1977

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: A yearly appeal for funds from readers. Discusses the poverty of the Catholic Worker and the purpose of that poverty in relation to Christ. Links the appeal for funds to the begging of St. Francis and the giving of funds to our love of God. Keywords: folly of the cross (DDLW #581).

Dear Friends,

We are all poor in one way or another, in soul, mind and body, in exterior or interior goals. Yet, even the widow gave her mite and the little boy his loaves and fishes, and the Lord will see to it that they are multiplied to cover our needs.

All through the year, we take what comes to us from day to day, to keep our three houses going in this area, and sometimes clothes come in, sometimes bread, and, last week, a whole carton of frozen ice cream sticks! It is only once a year that we imitate most truly the poverty of Christ and come to you and beg. There is a story of St. Francis, how, when he was a guest in the house of Cardinal Ugolino, he did not heat the food offered, but went out to beg, saying, playfully, "I have shown you honor by giving honor to a greater Lord in your home, for the Lord takes great pleasure in poverty, especially in the form of voluntary begging."

Individually, in our houses we beg from the one who holds the purse, and that purse is only filled by you, our readers. In return, we give what we have, the *Catholic Worker*, its articles and reviews, to you, and our services, as your stewards, to the destitute who come to our doors.

Sometimes, I think the purpose of the Catholic Worker, quite aside from all our social aims, is to show the providence of God, how God loves us. We are a family, not an institution, in atmosphere, and so we address ourselves especially to families, who have all the woes of insecurity, sin, sickness and death, side by side with all the joys of family. We talk about what we are doing, because we constantly wonder at the miracle of our continuance.

This work came about because we started writing of the love we should have for each other, in order to show our love of God. It's the only way we can know we love God.

For forty-four years we have maintained St. Joseph House of Hospitality in the city. The daily soup line still goes on there. Now, seventy-five people share St. Joseph House on First Street and Maryhouse on Third St., and about fifty are at the farm in Tivoli. Just the heating bill for these places is appalling. No use trying to be business-like. None of us has that talent. The paper sells for a cent a copy, and the printing bill is big. But no salaries are paid to anyone, so there is not that overhead. Besides, we want far more than a weekly wage. We

want God to teach us love. Without it, we are sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

The main thing, of course, is to love, even to the folly of the Cross. In the book of Hosea in the Old Testament, the picture of God's love is the picture of the prophet loving his harlot wife, and supporting not only her but her lovers. What foolish love, what unjudging love! And the picture of God's love in the New Testament is of Christ, our Brother, dying for us on the Cross, for us who are ungrateful, undeserving. Let us love God, since He first loved us. And let us show our love for God by our love for our neighbor.

Our Lord said, "To him who asks of thee, give, and from him who would borrow of thee, do not turn away." And so again we beg, in the name of St. Francis, and in the name of St. Therese, whose desire was to make Love loved.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

DOROTHY DAY

New York State law now requires that the following be printed with this letter:

Should anyone want a copy of the latest annual financial report which we file with the State, it can be obtained by writing to the New York State Board of Social Welfare, Office Tower, Empire State Plaza, Albany, N.Y. 12223, or to The Catholic Worker, 36 E. 1st St., New York, N.Y. 10003

The Editors