

Day After Day - April 1935

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: Description of her daughter's ninth birthday party and the child's Lenten mortifications. Notes the aim of Lent is to keep united to God through the suffering Humanity of His son. (DDLW #287).

On the Riviera the munition makers made merry in their serious way last month. Agents of Krupp and Schneider, Humbert de Wendel and others were present. Says *Time*, the weekly news magazine, "Ostensibly the 107 delegates of Europe's munitioneers were meeting as the International Railmakers' Association, and on the Riviera was that blithe international railmaker, Charles M. Schwab. Explained he: 'My doctors say I react favorably to the excitement of roulette.'"

We suppose the foregoing paragraph contains the pungent material desired by one of our correspondents last month. There's plenty of it to fill the paper, but we, too, "retreat" from such current events to recall occurrences of the month in a more cheerful vein.

There was Teresa's birthday party for instance. She was nine years old on the fourth of March, and there was a party, of course, up in the Harlem quarters with twenty-one of the little children who have been attending the classes there. First, there was a show and everyone sang with great willingness and afterwards there was a feast when tremendous quantities of cake and candy were consumed. The boxes of ice cream were like the widow's cruze in that they kept replenishing plates so that there were even some third helpings. One little girl got slightly ill, but otherwise there were no casualties. Little Lizzie, who was more discreet, took part of the cake home for her "poor old mother." Lizzie, who started off the singing of the afternoon was overcome with giggles at first, but she ended up gayly, singing all the popular songs with much verve.

The names of the children who attended the party were, as [far as] Ade Bethune can remember, Dorothy, Hattie, Bernard and Rudy Charles; Louise Jeminot; Lizzie; Alice Mabin; Alice Foster; Aurora Foster; Bernice and Elinore Thomas; another little girl by the name of Elinor; a Bobby; a William, and Mary, Helen, Catherine, Christina, Georgia and Rosie Giogas.

Teresa, this Sunday afternoon, was full of the excitement of counting up her mortifications for Lent. She was beginning well, with zest and enthusiasm. What were her mortifications? Eggs and candy and silence. The first you eat, the second you don't eat (but you are allowed cookies even with icing on them), and the third—well, silent periods one must learn to enjoy because of offering them up. These mortifications were for the convent life in general. During school hours there were sacrifices such as not looking out the window—and that is a tremendous one considering the forty days of Lent and spring on its way, and maple trees budding and starlings calling and two friendly old crows cheering the spring together.

Only yesterday, too, she looked out and soldiers were going down the country road and sacrifices and mortifications were forgotten in the joy of watching the marchers.

But in general, in the first flush of Lent, the struggle is undertaken bravely.

What if during the long weeks the fervor lessens and the work of accumulating graces was continued with many lapses, but by effort of will.

That time when *will* has to be brought into play is perhaps the most important of all, despite failures and the total lack of a sense of accomplishment, of growth.

Fervor comes again with Holy Week, joy comes on the day of resurrection, with all nature singing exultantly God's praises.

To keep united to God through the suffering Humanity of His son—that is the aim of Lent.