

Day After Day - October 1936

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: Encourages parents to begin religious education at home. Admires all the hard work of workers and friends. Notes that they “picketed St. Joseph” for their needs. (DDLW #305).

Eddie Priest came in this evening begrimed by toil and much in need of a shave. He's taking a turn at the lay apostolate in industry (and working for much needed cash!) And his job is spot welding, assembling, working a drill press, a punch press, and a hand metal brake in a sheet metal works in Brooklyn. His job is from eight to five-thirty, with forty-five minutes for lunch, and there are fourteen fellow-workers, all youths. “What's become of the older men?” he was wondering. And he was contemplating agitating for better sanitary and first-aid facilities.

Another Farm

During a visit to the Boston office last month I went up to St. Benedict's farm, a project of two of the workers around The Catholic Worker headquarters in Boston. Miss McSweeney and Mrs. Rawding have undertaken to put a farm in good shape, which is to take care of convalescing mothers and children next year. Meanwhile, three or four men are working on the place, which is a beauty spot twenty miles out of Boston, putting the grounds and house into condition. This is a good example of personal responsibility and blind faith on the part of these two workers. They have no funds, one is a school teacher and the other is putting in a great deal of her time begging for the place, acting the part of an Ambassador of God. Hazen Ordway, who spent a good part of his summer on The Catholic Worker Farm, is working with them.

Catechetical

A tremendous congress of priests, nuns and lay people working for the religious education of the large mass of children throughout the country who are going to the public schools was held at the Waldorf last month. The sessions on parent education, at one of which I spoke, especially interested me. Stress was laid on the need of parents to begin the religious education in the home. Those Catholic parents who leave the religious education of the child to the school alone seems to us to be on a par with the Fascist and the Communist, who also trust to schools alone and try to take everything out of the hands of the parents.

Knowing how much is being done in the rural sections of the country and in some large cities in the way of vacation schools and study clubs for the education of parents, it was good to see the congress being held in New York, where there are so many millions in need of just such instruction.

St. Joseph's House

The Catholic Worker is constantly growing and expanding to such an extent that we become muddle headed and forget to report important changes. We now have, in addition to the twenty-room rear house and the store on Mott street, four extra rooms for our guests. Also, there is now a friend of the paper in charge of the house, a woman of sixty who was sent to us by Father Monaghan. Tremendous reforms are under way in the shape of floor painting and systemization of work and duties. It sounds formidable, but her authority is voluntarily accepted and the reign of the ideals of gentle personalism continues. The work our new housekeeper loves most of all is the giving out of clothes, and she begs our readers to send in underwear, socks, sweaters, coats, shoes, blankets—anything our readers can spare. It does not matter how old the garment is. A torn sweater, worn-out in the sleeves still has a great deal of warmth in it, and the warmth of gratitude with which it is received should be felt by those kind readers who remember us in this way.

Another great change this month is that the business office is being transferred to Easton, Pennsylvania, where the farm is. The house of hospitality, the round-table discussions, the propaganda headquarters, all these remain at Mott street. But hereafter all mail will go to Easton, where Frank O'Donnell and his family, and Dan Irwin are joining the farm group permanently.

The Love of God

The way the priest at the Church of the Transfiguration goes up to the altar with out-stretched arms in the morning, the humble reverence of the Franciscan at the Church of the Precious Blood on Baxter street as he kneels at “The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us”, the gallant and tender figure of St. Joseph clasping the Christ Child at the same church, the willing co-operation of all the workers around Mott street this turbulent month when there was so much moving to be done, and all the work of the paper had to go on – these were some of the things which put us in mind of the love of God this past few days.

We picketed St. Joseph this past month, when we were sending out the appeal – asking him to take care of our temporal necessities, as he had to take care of the temporal necessities of the Blessed Mother and the Infant Jesus during those long hidden years at Nazareth. It was a peaceful and loving picketing, the crowd of us taking turns to go to the church and there in the presence of Christ our Leader, contemplate St. Joseph, that great friend of God and Protector of His Church. One of the girls in St. Joseph's house, when we announced the picketing at the breakfast table, wanted to know, very startled, whether she would have to carry a sign. We assured her that the sign she carried of her membership in the Mystical Body which Father Lord once said he could really see on people's faces, was sufficient.