

Fall Appeal - November 1967

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: An appeal for money. Notes their hospitality for the families of migrants, for pickets in the grape boycott, and the many apartments they rent. "Even as I am writing this a woman comes to borrow twenty-five dollars. She does this every so often and it usually is a dire need." (DDLW #856).

St. Joseph's House of Hospitality
still at 175 Chrystie Street
New York, N.Y. 10002

Dear Fellow Worker:

St. Paul writes about having nothing and yet possessing all things, and that is the way I feel as I set out on a journey to Rome, to attend the Third World Congress of the Lay Apostolate. All my expenses are paid by a generous friend, but I'm leaving the Catholic Worker family in debt (ten thousand dollars) and not enough money to mail this appeal. But one of the popes told us not to be afraid of running up bills for the poor, so I am not going to worry. The communion hymn of Ember Wednesday in September commands us "Be not sad, for the joy of the Lord is our strength." And a verse from one of the psalms says "Open your mouth and I will fill it."

I like that verse because right now we have given over the long dormitory which we have used at the farm all summer for women to a day-care center for the little ones of Negro migrants who come up from the South to harvest the apples and grapes these next six weeks. I visit each day and see the three or four young girls who are caring for them putting food into those tiny mouths, which are opened so trustingly. Thank God we have all this space in the country for such work, in addition to our hospitality, which makes us look like a rest house, as well as a center for seminars.

And here in the city, where I continue writing this letter, I wake up in the morning at six, not only to the sound of trucks on Kenmare Street, but the sound of the six Delano pickets stirring around getting their breakfast in the apartment upstairs. They spend no time reading news or listening to it. There are no books around to distract them. They are here for one thing, to go from the big market at Hunts Point to the piers where the grapes come in from the West Coast, to the stores where table grapes are sold retail, and to ask them not to buy while agricultural workers in the vineyards of California are getting starvation wages and none of the benefits which all the other workers enjoy under the National Labor Relations Act. These are dedicated men, with one thought in their minds, to work for better conditions for their fellows, and they work with love and with faith and hope, doggedly, day after day. They have not read the Pope's encyclicals **Mother and Teacher** or **The Development of Peoples**.

They live them. It is such work as theirs which has brought workers the five-day week, the eight-hour day, workers' compensation and employment insurance. Such work as this must be done, and everyone helping, to bring justice, not charity, to the workers. It is certainly part of justice to share what you have.

Meanwhile our soup line goes on, seven days a week, and Chrystie Street is open from seven to seven. The beds are full in the nine apartments we rent and our latest volunteer is sleeping on the floor. News about the new-old house is that work on it is proceeding, but slowly, what with strikes which keep us from getting some necessary materials. There'll be no moving till January, I'm afraid. And oh, the money that is needed there! Even as I am writing this a woman comes to borrow twenty-five dollars. She does this every so often and it usually is a dire need.

"Give when you are asked to give; and do not turn your back on a man who wants to borrow," Jesus said. And we all know that what we give will surely come back to us, heaped up, pressed down and running over. So please help us once more.

In the joy of the Lord,

Dorothy Day