

Sow In This Field

Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, October 1944, 2.

Summary: An appeal for money from readers which represents bread, warmth, and shelter. Says that the poor not only need natural help but the spiritual nourishment afforded by retreats and days of recollection. (DDLW #404).

October, 1944.

Dear Fellow Workers in Christ:

“Our troubles were multiplied; afterward we made haste.” That to me is one of the most comforting lines in the Psalms. Because we certainly are in trouble now, and as usual at this time of the year we are appealing to you, our readers. After a year of absence, I have taken over the paper and the work again, and am once more the mother of a very large family, and looking for the wherewithal to sustain them, both spiritually and physically. Again I am saying with St. Teresa: “Teresa and three ducats can do nothing, but God and St. Teresa and three ducats can do everything.”

“Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor; the Lord will deliver him in the evil day.” And “The poor you will always have with you,” Jesus has told us. In spite of war, the draft, government support, war industries—there are still many poor, who are sick, homeless and in trouble, in one way or another. We still have about nine houses around the country, and there are still seven or eight farms affiliated in one way or another with the work. And we have come to understand more, these last eleven years of work, concerning the needy and the poor—that they need more, far more than food, clothing and shelter. They need retreats, too—they need the word of God preached to them. So we have turned Maryfarm at Easton into a retreat house where we will have week-long and even two-week-long retreats as often as possible, and weekly days of recollection to “taste and see that the Lord is sweet.”

Often we feel that there is little we can do. But let us do all we can to lighten the sum total of suffering in this world. We are begging your help for our work; begging for your money help because money represents bread, warmth, shelter, and when you are sending us three ducats you are sending us what has come from your daily toil.

The farmer throws away his wheat, and the more abundantly he sows the more

abundantly he reaps. So we are begging you to scatter in this field, and show your love for God by the love you show for His least one.

We are asking this help in the name of the Mother of Fair Love, who possessed interiorly all riches, and so was the poorest of women on this earth. And we ask you in the name of St. Joseph, who had to witness her poverty and probably felt helpless, and inept, and understanding about why such poverty had to be. And in the name of our Lord Himself who had no place to lay his head during those years of His ministry. Please help us. You will find that God will “deliver you,” as a result of your love “in the evil day.”

Mary’s servant,

DOROTHY DAY.