

Articles on Work

By Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, from September 1946 to March 1947.

*Summary: A series of articles on work from *The Catholic Worker* during a period of rapid industrial growth shortly after the end of World War II. (DDLW #751).*

“The Church and Work” (DOC #154)- September 1946

Discusses in length the modern industrial problem of the machine and its relation to factory, land and worker. Explains the C.W.’s attempt to gain the workers back to Christ, by explicating a philosophy of work that distinguishes between those machines that are the extended hand of man and those that make man the extended hand of the machine. Such a philosophy sees people as cooperating with their creator, and to labor is to pray. Criticizes American Catholics for not applying Papal teaching to the work area and shows a particular acrimony to a priest who tell workers to sanctify their surroundings instead of changing it.

“Reflections on Work - November 1946” (DOC #227)

Emphasizes learning to work with crafts and trades to counter the evils of industrialism—to acquire a philosophy of work. Complains that clergy are too easily “bribed” by business and lauds the work of the French worker priests.

“Reflections on Work - December 1946” (DOC #229)

Reports on the hard life and work of the coal miners of Western Pennsylvania and the strike demands of John L. Lewis. “We want to change man’s work; we want to make people question their work; is it on the way to heaven or hell?” Emphasizes the holiness of work and the sacramental quality of property.

“Reflections On Work - January 1947” (DOC #431)

Quotes Peter Maurin’s account of the work of Leon Harmel whose exemplary industrial organization inspired Pope Leo XIII. Praises the Quebec governments homesteading policies. Repeats the need for a philosophy of work and the ideal of the village community. Keywords: distributism, industrialism.

“Reflections On Work - March 1947” (DOC #452)

Focuses on worker ownership and calls for workers to fight for the means of production, to shun working for the war effort, for priests to come out of their rectories to help the poor, and for all to start the struggle for reform of the social order and against charity growing cold. Repeats the need to be one with the poor and to resist the present social order.