

We Appeal To You

By Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, October 1951, 2.

Summary: Juxtaposes examples of destitution and need with instances of prayers answered in this appeal for funds. Prays to the Little Flower to help them make an oasis where love dwells. (DDLW #625).

Feast of the Little Flower.

Dear Fellow Workers in Christ:

Last month a baby was born on the Peter Maurin Farm and we rejoice. Last week one of our staff found a week old baby abandoned in Nativity Church entry, unwanted. One night a colored woman and a six-year-old boy came asking for a bed. Yesterday I found Anna, the mad woman, sleeping in our hallway. A woman with a nervous breakdown keeps trying for a job and coming back for shelter again and again. And the four floors for men are filled with those who come and go.

“So much with so little,” not “so little and so late.” This has been running through my head as I thought of writing this appeal. It never ceases to amaze us, how through all these eighteen years we can keep on serving coffee, regardless of price, and soup and bread in so many of our farms throughout the land. In New York five hundred or so come to be fed. We don’t actually count the servings. It’s like having a family. You hold your breath and wonder how many God is going to send.

I visited families last month where there were four children under three and no twins. We take what comes, and the Spanish saying, a baby is always born with a loaf of bread under its arm, is true. We have proved it in our Catholic Worker farms, houses of hospitality, and families, these many years. Voluntary Poverty works. It is practical, and we have found it so by practicing it. Sometimes one feels it a joy and we do not have to remind ourselves to rejoice always. But there are moments also when it becomes appalling, when the pressure of people and human need becomes overwhelming. But one can take time out to sit on a park bench across the street and look at the children in the playground and pray and the burden lifts.

All summer retreats have gone on at Maryfarm, Newburgh. At Peter Maurin Farm, now one year old, there are old and young, sick and well, living in community, baking for the breadline, gardening, maintaining an inn which we try to make as happy and comfortable as possible.

One afternoon this summer, three little children and I were walking through the fields and they showed me a Cross in the field over which were growing clusters of grapes. We stopped to say a prayer, and I suddenly thought to pray for the \$500 we needed to make a payment on the mortgage the following week. That

very evening a friend came to us and told us he had the money for our use. God answers prayers. This we know.

But He answers them through you, our readers, and through the saints who watch over our work. The chapel on the farm at Staten Island is named for the Little Flower so we say to her:

“Remember your happy life at home, your good father and mother and how you used to go fishing and walking and picnicking, how you celebrated the feast days of the church. Help us too to make others happy, because when people are happy then it is easier for them to be good. Help us to make a garden, an oasis, a little bit of Heaven here where love dwells. Where love is, there God is.”

Our wholesaler who provides us our flour, and our grocer on Mott Street, have let our bills ride. The bill of the former is almost \$2,000 for the past six months. We were horrified to see it climbing and have no money to pay. But after all, it is little when you think of the tens of thousands of meals served. So much for so little.

So we are begging you again for loaves and fishes, or the money to buy them, and the Lord will multiply them for us.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

DOROTHY DAY.