

Go To The Poor

By Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, May 1942, 4.

*Summary: Inspired by the beauty and inner-city location of Los Angeles' St. Bibiana Cathedral, this editorial focuses on the poor—"The closer we are to the poor, the closer to Christ's love." Because May, 1942 marked *The Catholic Worker's* tenth year, reminds readers that we are called to love all men, friend and foe alike, because all are brothers—"love is shown by works of mercy, not by war." (DDLW #383).*

GO TO THE POOR

This is an editorial for "little ones," for the poor, the meek, the suffering. I am writing it as I sit in St. Bibiana's Cathedral in Los Angeles, a place of joy and beauty, set in the slums of a great city.

How wonderful that it should be here, surrounded by the poor—yes not only by the poor, but the degraded and the lost ones of this world. Christ chose a stable as a place to be born in. So how He must love to be here.

Outside, on Second and Main streets in Los Angeles, there are pawnshops, saloons, burlesque shows, flophouses. It is the "Skid road" of the city, like our Bowery in New York. Inside, there is beauty and quiet and many bowed in prayer at early Mass.

Pope Leo XIII said the workers were lost to the Church.

Pope Pius XI said to his priests: "Go to the poor."

Our Lord walked the highways and byways, dusty and tired, to teach His brothers whom "God so loved." The closer we are to the poor, the closer to Christ's love.

GO TO MARY

Mary was poor. St. Bonaventure, in his life of Christ, said St. Joseph was so poor that he could not earn enough even for the simple wants of the Holy Family, so the Blessed Mother took in sewing. Oh Mother of beautiful love, of fear, of knowledge and of holy hope, teach us to be poor, ever to have less so that others may have more, always to be the little, the fools of this earth. Our Lord God, Creator of the world, was born in a stable. Lend us your heart, and come to the stable of our bodies, bearing our Lord to us, loving Him, praising Him, adoring Him for us.

A NEW YEAR

This editorial, marking the beginning of the tenth year of The Catholic Worker, is for all I met this month, all those families on the march, those soldiers going to and from leave, those prisoners I met at the reformatory at El Keno, for all our readers everywhere, the little and the poor.

It is to all of us that the Church comes, “calling attention to our high vocation as Christians, and to the great tasks, the conflicts and sufferings which confront us in the Kingdom of God” (Short Breviary, page 5, footnote).

We are the sons of God, believing in His Name, and we bring messages of prayer and penance (Father Hugo), and messages of peace (Father Orchard), messages to a world at war, a world to which penance is foolishness, and peace, treason.

We enter a new year with this month of May, and we enter with a joyful spirit, mindful of the love of God for us, and the love we should bear for all, friend and foe, English, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and Germans. They are our brothers, and love for them is “the fulfilling of the law.” Love is “the measure by which we shall be judged,” and that love is to be shown by works of mercy, not by war.

ST. PAUL’S MESSAGE

"Put ye on therefore, brethren, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience: bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another: even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. But above all these things, have charity, which is the bond of perfection: and let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body (Col. III: 12-15).