

# Liturgy and Sociology

Dorothy Day

*The Catholic Worker*, January 1936, 5.

*Summary: Through the Church's liturgical prayer we can overcome individualism and experience universal brotherhood in the Mystical Body of Christ. Once this relationship has been understood, we cannot ignore the suffering of our fellow man. The liturgy is the foundation of the apostolate of the laity. (DDLW #296).*

What is the connection between liturgy and sociology?

Why do we stress the importance of the liturgical movement?

Here is our simple explanation: *Individualism* has been discredited. Catholics cannot go the other extreme of *collectivism*. We must uphold *personalism* as a philosophy.

The basis of the liturgical movement is prayer, the liturgical prayer of the church. It is a revolt against private, individual prayer. St. Paul said, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." When we pray thus we pray *with* Christ, not *to* Christ. When we recite prime and compline we are using the inspired prayer of the church. When we pray with Christ (not to Him) we realize Christ as our Brother. We think of all men as our brothers then, as members of the Mystical Body of Christ. "We are all members, one of another," and, remembering this, we can never be indifferent to the social miseries and evils of the day. The dogma of the Mystical Body has tremendous social implications.

All the work of the Campion Propaganda Committee, its study and its activities against extreme nationalism, against racial hatreds, against social injustice has its basis in an understanding of the liturgical movement and a participation in it.

Once we heard a woman at a Catholic Action convention say, "Are you going to the liturgical lecture?" and her friend replied, "I am not interested in music." Many people confuse liturgy with rubric—with externals.

Again we urge the Campions, and with them our readers, to join with us in liturgical prayer. When we pray in this way we recognize the universality of the Church; we are praying with white and black and men of all nationalities all over the world. The Communist International becomes a pale thing in contrast.

Living the liturgical day as much as we are able, beginning with prime, using the missal, ending the day with compline and so going through the liturgical year we find that it is now not us, but Christ in us, who is working to combat injustice and oppression. We are on our way to becoming “other Christs.”

We cannot build up the idea of the apostolate of the laity without the foundation of the liturgy.