

Our Spring Appeal - April 1955

Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, April 1955, 2.

Summary: Asks for help, reminding us that we get what we need since "God is not to be outdone in generosity." Notes their Lenten fasting and the results they can expect. (DDLW #685).

Catholic Worker

223 Chrystie St.

New York 2, N.Y.

Feast of St. Joseph

Dear Beloved:

The first Christians were known by their love for each other, and we find that addressed in the epistles. "Love is an exchange of gifts," St. Ignatius said, and we certainly feel a great sense of love and gratitude to you when you answer our appeals. St. Teresa said she was so grateful a person she could be bought with a sardine! (Wish I could find that exact quotation!) Anyway all the small gifts add up and we sure need them.

As usual we have a houseful of beloveds to take care of right now, from an 80-year-old one at Maryfarm, to two unborn ones on the way. Men, women and children make up our large family. Helen Isvolsky, author and teacher, said once our places reminded her of Tolstoi's home, which pleased us mightily, and in a way describes our atmosphere. Since we have no writers of best sellers around here, and only charge a cent for THE CATHOLIC WORKER, we have to send out this semi-annual appeal to help feed our fellow workers, which include the breadline too.

There is spring in the air which makes it easier for that same breadline, thank God. Though it always makes me want to weep to see it. The two little privet bushes in the back yard have small buds on them and there is a glow on the plane trees across the street. Lent is Spring so there is even an element of joy in prayer and fasting, which usually come so hard.

It isn't such great things that our Heavenly Father is asking of us, after all. He is not hard on us. His yoke is easy and his burden light, because He is Love. The epistles and gospels teach us so much during Lent. This morning it was the

story of Naaman the leper. He was asked to do such a little thing—to wash in the Jordan to be healed and he was indignant. He would have gone away if his servant had not said, “Father, if you had been asked to do some GREAT thing you would do it!” So he washed and was healed.

It is the same with us. We don’t realize what great healings of body and soul will follow prayer and fasting, and the almsgiving that goes with fasting. It seems such a little thing to ask in the face of the threat of world war, in the face of the destitution we see of mind and body and soul. Yet if we do these things the results will follow. We shall be saved. We shall have our reward and here in this life too, a hundred-fold, pressed down and running over, a full measure. God is not to be outdone in generosity.

There are several around the Catholic Worker who are taking literally nothing but one meal a day during Lent—no coffee, no comforting bread besides. But all of us, you might say, are on the breadline, begging your help.

I write this sitting in old St. Patrick’s church, around on Mott street, and I write with prayer that you will answer, and that God will bless you for it in your own homes and needs.

Gratefully in Christ,

DOROTHY DAY