

# Collection One

Dorothy Day

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The following articles by Dorothy Day appeared in *The Catholic Worker* newspaper from its inception in May of 1933 through 1935.

They tell the story of the beginnings of the **Catholic Worker Movement**. To Our Readers

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*The Catholic Worker*, May 1933, 4 (First Issue)

*Summary: States that the purpose of the paper is to articulate the Church's social program and to popularize the Popes' social encyclicals. (DDLW #12).*

For those who are sitting on park benches in the warm spring sunlight.

For those who are huddling in shelters trying to escape the rain.

For those who are walking the streets in the all but futile search for work.

For those who think that there is no hope for the future, no recognition of their plight - this little paper is addressed.

It is printed to call their attention to the fact that the Catholic Church has a social program - to let them know that there are men of God who are working not only for their spiritual, but for their material welfare.

### **FILLING A NEED**

It's time there was a Catholic paper printed for the unemployed.

The fundamental aim of most radical sheets is the conversion of its readers to radicalism and atheism.

Is it not possible to be radical and not atheist?

Is it not possible to protest, to expose, to complain, to point out abuses and demand reforms without desiring the overthrow of religion?

In an attempt to popularize and make known the encyclicals of the Popes in regard to social justice and the program put forth by the Church for the "reconstruction of the social order," this news sheet, *The Catholic Worker*, is started.

It is not as yet known whether it will be a monthly, a fortnightly or a weekly. It all depends on the funds collected for the printing and distribution. Those who can subscribe, and those who can donate, are asked to do so.

This first number of *The Catholic Worker* was planned, written and edited in the kitchen of a tenement on Fifteenth Street, on subway platforms, on the “L,” the ferry. There is no editorial office, no overhead in the way of telephone or electricity, no salaries paid.

The money for the printing of the first issue was raised by begging small contributions from friends. A colored priest in Newark sent us ten dollars and the prayers of his congregation. A colored sister in New Jersey, garbed also in holy poverty, sent us a dollar. Another kindly and generous friend sent twenty-five. The rest of it the editors squeezed out of their own earnings, and at that they were using money necessary to pay milk bills, gas bills, electric light bills.

By accepting delay the utilities did not know that they were furthering the cause of social justice. They were, for the time being, unwitting cooperators.

Next month someone may donate us an office. Who knows?

It is cheering to remember that Jesus Christ wandered this earth with no place to lay His head. *The foxes have holes and the birds of the air their nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.* And when we consider our fly-by-night existence, our uncertainty, we remember (with pride at sharing the honor), that the disciples supped by the seashore and wandered through corn fields picking the ears from the stalks wherewith to make their frugal meals.

# Chapter 2

## The Listener - May 1933

*The Catholic Worker*, May 1933, pp. 1, 5

*Summary: A collection of vignettes about the unemployed, union efforts, working conditions, wages, education, companies—"The depression goes on." (DDLW #934).*

### BEER

Today everybody is hilariously drinking beer and on the roads from the farms the dairy farmers are dumping milk.

### THIRTY HOUR WEEK

The thirty-hour week bill passed by the Senate exempts farm workers, domestic help, officers, executives, superintendents and their personal and immediate clerical assistants. Also there is an amendment to exempt canneries and establishments engaged in preparing fish, fruits and vegetables of a perishable nature. The Secretary of Labor is given power to grant further exemptions.

Senator Hugo Black (D), of Alabama, author of the bill, declared that as a result of the bill 6,000,000 unemployed would be put back to work. And then there are about eleven million left, not to speak of those who are on part time.

### SCHOOL PUPILS STRIKE

In Chicago 12,000 pupils are showing unusual consideration for their teachers. They went on strike to protest unpaid salaries. Some of the teachers blandly said that the walkout was due to spring fever, and other teachers not in favor of being struck for, claim that "reds" are agitating, as they doubtless are. Whether or not the strike is due to Communist agitation,

teachers should receive their pay, and there should be no reduction in the budget of the board of education just at this time when so many young boys and girls who would work if they could get jobs are going back to school to try to fit themselves for jobs when jobs are available. Schools have never been so crowded, and all over the country schools are closing, not paying their teachers, and cutting their budgets.

## WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

Talked to Pauline Newman of the International Ladies' Garment Workers today. She said, "There's only two ways of bettering the condition of women in labor. One is organization and the other is legislation. Women in industry are only ten per cent organized. So it stands to reason that legislation is the best remedy. We have legislation which promotes sanitary working conditions and better hours. Minimum wage legislation was never passed in this state up to this time. Its only opponent was the National Woman's Party. And what do they know about it? Do they know anything about hours of work or wages? They don't. I told some women at a meeting how we struck once to get an extra penny for twenty dozen sleeves. That seems like a petty thing to fight for.

"One penny more for twenty dozen sleeves!

"But girls have to consider carfare, lunch money. The Women's Party is always harking back to the old days when women were classed legally with children and idiots—in need of protection. Now they think if there is any legislation to keep women from night work they are being discriminated against. They are being protected! They don't want to be protected, they say. They have the vote now and they don't need protection. They must take their place with men in the world!

"Schooling nowadays is a farce. It certainly doesn't prepare young people for life or work. What are they taught in the way of trades? What are they taught about social conditions? Nothing. They are utterly unprepared to face conditions, and facing them to do anything about them."

## "NOT A BAD OUTFIT"

Heard somebody talking about the Bell Telephone Company today. They're not so bad, they were saying. When they are laying off their men, and they've been laying them off pretty steady, they give them notice, and if a man has been with the firm fifteen years he gets fifteen weeks salary. And they always paid their men pretty good. So a man can sit down and figure out how he can live for the next decade or so during the present decay of the social order and during its ultimate reconstruction.

He can study and apply to himself some of the budgets prepared by the charities' organizations, telling how a working class family can feed itself on five dollars a week . . . Of course the Telephone Company goes on paying dividends—nine per cent. If they had cut the dividends

they would have been able to keep their men on. But up to now they haven't cut their dividends. Them as has-gits.

There was rumors, however, that this quarter the dividends were going to be cut, and men were going to be kept on and paid engineers' wages even though the only work for them to do was ditch digging.

### OLD-FASHIONED FAIR

The depression goes on.

Fourteenth Street, Twenty-third Street, Forty-second Street, Broadway and especially lower Broadway, have taken on the aspect of the old-fashioned fair. There are hawkers to sell toys, flowers, razor blades, shoe laces, corn cures, jig saw puzzles, neckties and self-threading needles. The toy sellers buy fruit and candy, the fruit and candy men buy razor blades, and the razor blade men buy ice cream, and the ice cream men buy neckties, and the necktie men buy toys, and so on and so on. They keep each other going. Ill-fed men walk with signs advertising restaurants and unkempt men who need a shave advertise barber shops.

All the men who are out of work picket the places from which they have been fired. Patiently all day long, month after month, they walk up and down before their former places of business, moving picture houses, garages and restaurants.

Unionism! What has become of it?

The unions have thrown up their hands in despair. They can do nothing more about wages. People will take what they can get.

## TOWARD WHAT END?

Some things are getting done. As we walked down the street this afternoon we noticed that windows had been washed for the springtime. People who still had quarters were buying potted plants from a street vendor to put in their front windows.

Union Square has been refurbished during the winter, shrubs have been planted and trees set out so that the unemployed may sit in comfort in the shade instead of in the glaring sun of last summer.

The Washington Centennial building is being torn down in Bryant Park and there will be more room there for peripatetic philosophers and their listeners.

The state legislature has passed a minimum wage law for women, but not unemployment insurance, only an unemployment reserve fund.

## PRESSURE ON HIS TIME

Alfred E. Smith, one of our most prominent Catholics, refused to be interviewed for this, the first number of our paper. We wrote and asked him to allow us to interview him so that we



might have a few quotable remarks on Russia, unemployment, housing, the sales tax, income tax, armaments and such matters, and his secretary replied:

“The Governor regrets that he is unable to comply with your request for an appointment. The pressure on his time is so great . . . Very truly yours.”

So we must content ourselves this issue with contributions from a more humble Catholic whose address, when he is not employed outside of the city in manual labor, is Uncle Sam’s Hotel, the Bowery.

In our next issue we will endeavor to get a contribution from Mayor O’Brien. (We would go to Washington and try President Roosevelt except that we need the fare to put towards the publishing bill.) And failing to reach Mayor O’Brien, we will try the door man at the city hall, or one of the unemployed sitting on a City Hall Park bench.

## THE MOST BRUTAL TRADE

In the garment trade, the most “brutal” of all the trades in which women are employed, as one worker put it, Klein-on-the-Square, the famous Fourteenth Street clothier, is called the “undertaker” because he keeps his eyes open for dying concerns and buys them out.

“But he’s no worse, perhaps not so bad as some of the big department stores,” one young fashion editor was heard saying. “There they take a model and have it copied and they give the job to sweat shops in other states, such as New Jersey and Connecticut, where there is no law on working conditions and hours.

“And what about the wages paid by the big stores? In Stern’s girls get ten dollars a week and they have to dress decently, buy shoes, stockings, presentable clothes, lunches and carfares out of that. What have they left for board and room?

“Macy boasts of taking only college girls and society girls working for ‘experience’ or ‘pin money’ and pays them ten and twelve a week. What good is a college education if it fits you for such wages?”

## FOLTIS-FISCHER STRIKE

In another column of this issue we print letters from waitresses who are being done out of their salaries and forced to subsist solely on tips. For generally bad working conditions, Foltis-Fischer is one of the worst restaurants in New York. You will notice that men are picketing up and down in front of their chain of restaurants throughout the city, and the strike of employees there has been a bitter one. If the public coöperated with the workers and refused to go into a restaurant where men were picketing in front, there might be more chance for strikers to win their fight for justice.

## DRIVE ON SWEAT SHOPS

And speaking of the coöperation of the public, a drive against sweat shops has been started. The campaign was decided upon April 11 at a conference called by the Women's Trade Union League, and the aim is a label on women's garments as part of an appeal to all women buyers to shun garments made in sweat shops. The Committee for the Abolition of Sweat Shops is made up of representatives of the garment employers' associations, the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, and national women's organizations representing the public and consumers.

Decent hours and wages are to be fought for now. Fifteen years or so ago a campaign was started by unions and women's organizations to abolish unsanitary working conditions and by means of a label the public was kept informed. Employers of women were forced to provide healthful surroundings for their employees to work in, and the old, evil-smelling and badly lighted sweat shop was done away with. Now, though the plants are better equipped, the hours and the wages are worse than they have been for decades. **D. D.**

# Chapter 3

## Maurin's Program

*The Catholic Worker*, June-July 1933, 4.

*Summary: Outlines Peter Maurin's three step program of social reconstruction (round table discussions, houses of hospitality, farm colonies) led by the laity working out the principles in the Popes' encyclicals on social justice. (DDLW #266).*

### MAURIN'S PROGRAM

FRANCES PERKINS, Secretary of Labor, says that she is grateful for every plan which is sent in suggesting a method of reconstruction. Like the government, THE CATHOLIC WORKER is interested in hearing what the Catholic layman has to say. It offers itself as a mouthpiece and it pledges its cooperation in the working out of the principles in the Popes' encyclicals on social justice.

We believe that there are many groups of Catholic men and women throughout the country who are organizing in study groups and who would like some way to communicate with one another. There are many platforms and programs and it is not the intention of the paper to embrace any one of these but to give space to all.

Peter Maurin (whose name we misspelled in the last issue) has his program which is embodied in his contributions this month. Because his program is specific and definite he thinks it better to withdraw his name from the editorial board and continue his contact with the paper as a contributor. "As an editor," he says, "it will be assumed that I sponsor or advocate any reform suggested in the pages of THE CATHOLIC WORKER. I would rather definitely sign my own work, letting it be understood what I stand for.

"My program stands for three things. Round Table Discussions, and I hope to hold the first at the Manhattan Lyceum the last Sunday of June. Why the Manhattan Lyceum? Yes, I know that it is the place usually chosen by the Communists and radicals for their meetings. But it is cheap. We can have a hall holding 150 people for eight hours for ten dollars. I have paid a deposit of three. I have no more money now but I hope to beg the rest. I hope

everybody will come to this meeting. I want Communists, radicals, priests and laity. I want everyone to set forth his views. I want the clarification of thought.

“The next step in the program is houses of hospitality. In the Middle Ages it was an obligation of the bishops to provide houses of hospitality or hospices for the wayfarer. They are especially necessary now, and necessary to my program as half-way houses. I am hoping that some one will donate a house, rent free, for six months so that a start may be made. A priest will be at the head of it and men gathered through our round table discussions will be recruited to work in the houses cooperatively and eventually be sent out to farm colonies or agronomic universities. Which comes to the third step in my program. People will have to go back to the land. The machine has displaced labor, the cities are overcrowded. The land will have to take care of them.

“I am not saying that my program is for everyone, it is for those who choose to embrace it. I am not opposed to private property with responsibility. But those who own private property should never forget that it is a trust.”

# Chapter 4

## The Listener

*The Catholic Worker*, June-July 1933, 1, 5.

*Summary: Commentary on social conditions of the wealthy J.P. Morgan, of working men and women, and the increasing evictions. Describes the reactions of Communists and others to the initial issue of The Catholic Worker\* on May 1st. (DDLW #267).\**

The Listener

News

A READING of the one day's newspapers on this, the last day before going to press, gives a general indication of the events of the month

It is not a cheerful survey.

J. P. Morgan holds the public eye all over the nation with his nonchalant though forced disclosures of how he did not pay his income tax for the last three years, how his partners paid no taxes for the last two, and of how perfectly legal it all is, how they gave favored persons the opportunity to make profits without risk, how Mr. John J. Raskob hoped he could reciprocate some day, how J. P. has a grip on the railroads, and on public utilities which serve 55,272,000 people (and overcharge them), etc., etc., etc.

Mr. Morgan in a written statement to the committee said that he did not think private bankers ought to be regulated by National or State authorities; that private bankers in the years since the Middle Ages had developed a code of ethics which seemed to be more effective in protecting their customers than banking laws.

The *World Telegram* shows some very amusing cartoons of Mr. Morgan sailing along in his limousine, Mr. Morgan eating a luscious meal and Mr. Morgan sitting in a deck chair on his yacht, philosophically taking his losses, capital losses which enabled him legally to evade payment of income tax.

For some reason or other, largely personal it seems, Senator Carter Glass of Virginia is waging such a fight with Ferdinand Pecora for the Senate Investigation Council that the interest of the nation is divided between Morgan's testimony and Senator Glass's squabbles with Pecora.

There is a lot more talk of driving money changers out of the temple, Woodin, Senator McAdoo, John J. Raskob, Norman H. Davis and former Secretary of the Navy Charles Francis Adams being amongst them.

It happened this month that a friend of the editors, who is Chief Engineer on a freighter, had just come in from India and was docked over in Brooklyn right next to Mr. Morgan's yacht which cost I don't know how many millions to build and which costs a quarter of a million a year to run. Or some such figures. When it comes to dealing in millions and billions, one becomes vague.

One of the editors of the CATHOLIC WORKER enjoyed the privilege of surveying the yacht at close quarters. It was in dry dock and its bottom was being scraped by some score of men and all about them red rust filtered down through the May sunlight, and the handles of their long brushes and scrapers moved rhythmically and steadily up and down the sleek sides of the bottom of the vessel. It was a sight which reminded one of a stage setting of a modern play. The boat was a thing of such beauty that it lifted one's heart to see it. All about little boats bobbed at the docks. There was Vincent Astor's yacht, and a strange black boat which belonged to another millionaire. There was a funny old boat being fitted up to go treasure hunting.

\* \* \*

The Corsair, which is Mr. Morgan's boat, was empty and barren and beautiful within. But it was unused. There it was standing useless, and poor Mr. Morgan, haled down to Washington by the Senate Committee, was forced to sit, day by day, and be interrogated. There is some consolation in the thought.

And we thought, too, in respect to Morgan's utility holdings, of poor Mrs. Cutler who lived next door to us a year ago down on Twelfth Street, and how she had her electricity and her gas shut off, and how her husband, a house painter, was and had been out of work for two years. And how that afternoon when we dropped in to see her little girl who was sick, we found that there was nothing to eat in the house, neither cereal nor milk for the child, nor an orange to quench her thirst. . . .

\* \* \*

To go back to the daily paper, we have to report that evictions in New York have increased from 9,500 to 12,000 for the month of April, and with talk of increased evictions during the month of May. And how many apartments in the city are standing empty!

At Public Service Commission hearings during the month, statements of large dividends paid by the nine electric light companies of the metropolitan division show that there should be no difficulty made over reducing rates temporarily, Corporation Council Arthur J. W. Hilly said. Mr. Hilly promised to demand reduction by July 1. That is a note of cheer. We don't like the word temporarily, however.

To the surprise of everyone, the manufacturer's sales tax as a method of raising Federal revenue was rejected by the House of Representatives.

By a vote of 324 to 76 the House passed the Industrial Recovery Bill, which provides for Federal regulation of industry, hours of work and wages, and provides for \$3,000,000,000 in public works and \$220,000,000 in new taxes to amortize the work project.

\* \* \*

## GAS COMPANY

LAST week I talked to a boy who had been working with the Brooklyn Union Gas Company for the last winter. One of the gas house gang. Now he was looking for work on a ship – any kind of work.

“After cleaning clinkers out of generators—red hot ones— and chipping paint, and cleaning and trimming scows, I’ve got the muscle to work,” he said. “I’m over age for the reforestation camps, and beside that you’ve got to get in through the Home Relief Bureau, and we haven’t had to apply for that yet. I’m strong on the shovel, so I ought to be able to do work on a ship. The hardest job connected with work in the gas house gang was cleaning the purifying boxes. The vats are full of iron oxide and sticky with a tar-like deposit, and you have to get in there and shovel and clean out. You work with the smell of gas in your nose and throat all day. You feel continually sick from it. There is a putrid smell, like a bunch of rotting carcasses all around you. Several of the new guys who had come in on the job fainted dead away and had to be hauled out. I stuck with the old guys and did what they did and kept away from the pipes where the smell was strongest. One way to combat the taste in your mouth and the smell in your nose is to drink milk with raw onions chopped up in it and eat a lot of onions for lunch.

“The company is all right, and the pay—twenty-three a week wasn’t bad,” he continued. “It was an eight-hour day and a five-day week, and if it was pouring rain they didn’t make you go out in it. But what is really the trouble is laying off guys all the time. Machines continually replacing the old fellows. In the new boiler room at Greenpoint there are five boilers with one man to take care of them. There is one man to four generators. At the time I got fired a few weeks ago there was an old Pole working with me and he was fired too after being with the company fifteen years. He kept saying that he couldn’t go home. ‘The wife keeps crying all the time,’ he says. ‘Then I cry too. All the time she cries in the house so last night I didn’t go home, but slept at a pool room on one of the tables. I don’t want to go home tonight either.’ ”

The boy who was talking to me (he has Communist leanings) had not yet got to the point of hating and execrating the bosses. He said, “The pay was all right.” But he ignored the fact

that the men were not being paid according to responsibilities. For instance, the old Pole had a wife and family and was working for a comparatively lower wage than the boy, who had no ties and no one to look after but himself. The old Pole was performing a duty to the State by raising a family and he was even more entitled to a living wage than the boy.

“The girl I am going with is an Italian,” the boy went on. “She works in a factory making seamless hat linings at fifteen cents a hundred. The seamless hat linings are intended for twenty-five and thirty-five dollar hats. She has a hard time getting along. Nobody dares to organize and nobody dares to strike because they need what money they can get.”

\* \* \*

## RACK TENDING

PEOPLE are reading pamphlets on social doctrine now," the girl who is the rack tender at a large church uptown said. "I ordered a bunch of pamphlets from the N. C. W. C. down in Washington and they have gone very well. People ask for *The Rights and Duties of Citizenship*, *the Civics Catechism*, and this last month or so they've called for *The Ethics of War* I\*\*have to order more of those. I have the two encyclicals on labor, by Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI too. There is one man comes in and gets the encyclical *On the Reconstruction of the Social Order*, by the dozen, every week or so."

The rack tender at this church is a guide and adviser to all the strangers who drop into the church during the afternoon. She is there from four to six, checking up the pamphlets, of which she sells thousands, and answering the queries of the people going in and out of the church. The other afternoon when I saw her she was busily engaged in looking through a newspaper to find out what was a good play or movie for a visitor to New York to see. One woman who said she did not know what to do with her time and that she was on a verge of a nervous breakdown, and that she was very lonely and miserable, etc., was referred to a priest, given a list of things she might do to occupy her time in visiting the city to which she was a stranger, supplied with some helpful pamphlets and sent on her way much cheered.

## IS WORK A PRIVILEGE OR A RIGHT?

DOWN on lower Broadway there is the restaurant called Stanley's. From the outside it appears to be a small restaurant, but when you go in you find that it stretches out over a whole floor. There is an upstairs restaurant too.

Some one had told me, "Don't eat in there, they don't pay their waitresses anything." And I wanted to find out more about it so I went in, and after the bright and clean young girl had served me I told her what I had heard.

"Yes, it's perfectly true," she said. "I've been working here quite some time. At first I worked for six a week, then they lowered it last year to three. And now for the last eight months we



have been working for nothing. They mark it on their income tax, too, the fact that they hire forty-eight employees and that the employees serve gratis. And the Government doesn't do anything about it so probably there is nothing to be done.

"But of course the income tax department has nothing to do with the Labor Department. That's true. But if you complained to the State Department of Labor you'd have to give your name, and the other girls would have to make statements, and you'd be getting yourself and them into trouble. You'd just end up by losing your job.

"We go to work at ten thirty in the morning and we work until eight thirty, a good many of us, though some are laid off earlier. Of course we try to work as long as we can so that we'll get more tips. When we work from ten-thirty to eight-thirty, we take two hours off in the afternoon, but what can you do with those two hours? You can't go home. You can only walk around."

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First issue of *Catholic Worker* Distributed May Day in Union Square

The crowds in Union Square stopped to gaze on May 1, not only at the massed parades, blary bands, and various red banners, but also at the caption, The CATHOLIC WORKER, being displayed and distributed everywhere. Communists who make soap-box speeches were frankly shocked at its appearance, refuting as it did their claim that the Church is interested only in squeezing money from the people to send to Rome. Even more surprising to them was the revelation that Catholicism has a definite social program to aid the worker.

One old Italian, turned Communist because of unemployment and near starvation, remarked after reading a copy of our paper, "Ya know, da Church, she wanta help us after all. I t'ink I drop da red flag an' take up da ross again."

Some comments, of course, were not favorable. A young fellow, unshaven, his hair almost to his shoulder, and wearing a variety of red ribbons on his coat, reminded the writer of a scotch terrier that had won a half dozen second prizes at some kennel show. Glancing at our title, he muttered, "Aw, ya can't fool us . . . you're just tryin' to put the comrades we've liberated under the yoke of capitalism again."

If only he had taken the trouble to look over our program he would have realized that that is exactly what we are not trying to do. We are entirely in sympathy with demands for better labor conditions, decent wages, and unprejudiced justice. We who edit and contribute to this sheet are unemployed ourselves, barely eking out an existence. Yet because of our desire for better conditions we see no reason for renouncing Christianity-the religion that has helped and elevated mankind for nearly 2,000 years.

Although the Communists may not as yet be aware of it, they witnessed in Union Square on May Day the inception of a new struggle for social justice. A germ of more than mere passive interest was planted in the minds of many who either read The CATHOLIC WORKER or saw its headlines displayed.

As soon as the worker realizes that the Church Militant is interested in man's welfare as well as his soul, he will stop to consider before embracing Communism and its atheistic ideas. The Scriptures, history, tradition and common sense will tell him that without God there is neither happiness, security or prosperity, either in men or in nations.

# Chapter 5

## The Listener

*The Catholic Worker*, July-August 1933, pp. 1,8

*Summary: Notes labor unrest and growing awareness of inequalities in the social system. Lauds doing what one can, quoting saints. (DDLW #884).*

### ECONOMY

“We are making every possible economy in all directions, which include adjustment in salaries and rotation of employment. We have no bonus plan or special compensation given in addition to the salaries of either officers or employees,” says H.S. Wilkinson, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Crucible Steel Company of America at the annual meeting of the stockholders in May.

“Reports we get by telephone indicate steel operations this week showed a marked increase all along the line,” he added.

Meanwhile the Communists are busily doing their best to organize the steel industry. Low salaries and unemployment, the “every possible economy in all directions” Mr. Wilkinson talked about, are making such organization possible.

About sixty per cent of the steel workers are unemployed and less than two per cent are organized, according to charges made by a new steel union, organized by Communists, which now has a membership of 3,500 members. There are 577,000 steel workers. Of those working, many are working on the stagger plan, many as little as one day every two weeks. Wages have been cut; relief is almost non-existent. The average is one dollar a week for a family of five or six, and this is rarely in cash. Unmarried steel workers receive no relief. Organization of any kind, even by the old union, the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Tin and Steel Workers, is fought by the steel industry. No stranger is permitted to remain in company towns without investigation. Meetings and organization are forbidden and organizers of every kind must function under cover.

## DOING THEIR BIT

People are becoming conscious of the inequalities of the social system and are awakening to their responsibility toward their neighbor. Down in Staten Island a young manager of one of the Roulston's stores was fired with no explanation. He was the only one in the family working and his father was a cripple. The neighbors and all the people who traded at Roulston's organized a protest, and keeping the petition at an adjacent butcher shop they got signatures from everyone who came in, to send to the management of the store, asking for his reinstatement. A year or so ago they would not have been so alive to the need for social action.

## BEST OR NOTHING?

"The best is the enemy of the good," Father Joseph P. McSorley quoted to us in talking over the first number of THE CATHOLIC WORKER. He was translating from the Italian and the little saying was by way of pointing out that it was pleasing in the sight of God to do the good one could and not to neglect doing that because of ambitious desire to do the "best."

Don Bosco felt that way about it too. In his biography we read about a friend of the great Italian who always wished to do the very best, and how Don Bosco always went ahead on the other hand and did what he could, piling up achievement after achievement with his very small and humble beginnings. To make a start, that was the thing. Not to wait until it was possible to make the perfect thing.

And just a few Sundays ago we heard a little talk from a parish priest down in Staten Island. He was talking to the children about their posture in kneeling and the necessity for a vehement Amen to the final prayers said by the priest at the foot of the altar.

"Snap to it!" he had shouted, right in the midst of those final prayers. It was the children's Mass and he kept them afterwards for a talk, telling them that if they didn't do a thing right instead of half-heartedly, they might as well stay outside the door.

And I thought sadly, if we waited to pray until we had the fervor of a saint, we'd wait a long time.

The great St. Teresa wrote in her autobiography of the thoughts which were like "little gnats which buzz about by night here and there," and troubled her at her prayers. "Against this evil I know no remedy," she said. "The sole remedy which I met with, after having wearied myself for many years is. . . to consider the memory no better than a madman, and to leave it alone with its folly, for God alone can check out its extravagances."

*St. Thomas Aquinas declared that, for the practice of virtue, a certain amount of good was indispensable. . . . Cardinal Manning said that God's commandments could not be preached to men without empty stomachs. – Abbe Lugan.*

# Chapter 6

## The Listener

*The Catholic Worker*, Sept 1933, 1, 8.

*Summary: Daily chronicle of efforts to organize workers by communists and neighborhood councils. Tells of visitors stopping by to get copies of The Catholic Worker. (DDLW #269).*

July 12 –

Saw Francis Gorman of the Textile Union this afternoon. They were having an emergency meeting up at the union headquarters. The men all looked very tired. He was holding his head in his hands, wondering how the Industrial Recovery Administration was going to enforce the code. . . . The situation in the mills is bad. The manufacturers speeding up production right now. The stretchout system working everybody overtime. The situation in Paterson very bad. They are much in need of organizers, with every labor body trying to organize the workers now that organization has been admitted as legal.

July 13 –

A hotel employee called at the office of *The Catholic Worker* to put in a complaint as to how the Hotel Men's Association was ill-treating its help, twelve hour shifts, seven day week, no food and very small wages being the general rule. The man who came in was a Frenchman who had worked all his life in hotels and knew whereof he spoke. He was enthusiastic about our recommendation, in the July-August issue, to organizations to investigate conditions at hotels before using their facilities for Communion Breakfasts.

July 15 –

As we sat in the office (a Saturday evening) a Communist meeting started just a few doors down the street under the lamp post. There are always street noises, – the children playing ball, the taxis and cars tooting for them to get out of the way, mothers calling to their children, the constant screaming of brakes, radios, the roar of the “L” a block away, but for a long while as I sat at my typewriter I had been conscious of a new and louder sound. It was a bellowing, a shouting that resounded up and down the street. I had not noticed it for a time because when a prize fight is being broadcast every radio down the street multiplies the sound of the one voice until the voice seems to fill the air to the exclusion of everything else. That was the way it was this evening, and I had not been paying any attention to it.

I looked out of the window finally and saw a white painted kitchen chair, an American flag tied on one side, and a group of perhaps twenty-five standing around listening to the speaker. The buildings before him acted as a perfect sounding board. The acoustics were excellent for his purpose, and he could be heard up and down the length of the block. People indoors could hear every word, and people sitting on their stoops and hanging out of their windows seeking a cool breath of air, were listeners willy-nilly.

They were, we gathered, members of an Unemployed Council in the neighborhood. They were distributing their organ, the *Hunger Fighter*, and they were announcing a dance, the admission to which was ten cents. They talked too about the lying press – about politics – about their fellow workers. Fellow worker, fellow worker, fellow worker, the voice went on relentlessly. Usually it is “comrades and fellow workers.” This speaker must have formerly been a wobbly, in other words an I.W.W., from the West.

The speaking went on and on. A policeman went up and down the block, circled around like an uneasy watch dog, and finally took up his station in the middle of the street in back of them.

Two little boys passed under my window. “Those guys never shut up talking,” one of them was saying.

“Oh shut up, fellow worker,” little Ethel who lives upstairs protested. Her bed was at the window and she too was an unwilling audience.

A half-mad woman passing by went up to the chair and shook her fist in the speaker’s face. Then she went and sat down on her stoop. As one speaker got down from the chair, another got up. The visible audience was sparse, but they had the whole street listening. It was a hot night and there was nothing else to do.

When finally they went away, with their chair and their American flag, I counted them and there were twelve, half the number who were grouped around them.

There are not many Communists speaking in the squares now. Their new policy is to go around to the residential streets and talk to small groups and distribute their literature. Active work is being done by the Unemployed Councils, and it is along these same lines that Catholics should work. See story on Neighborhood Councils, page 2.

July 18 –

It was just after writing the above that Miss Kathryn Dalton came into the office to find out about our work. She had found a copy of the paper in her parish church and she wanted to know how she could help. She had not come to tell us about her work. It was very modestly and diffidently that she spoke of it, finally, after discussion of many other things.

“I am doing the same thing the Unemployed Councils are,” she said. “Not having a job and wanting to keep busy, I started to take up some cases which had applied to the Home Relief Bureau without getting any relief. I took the cases into the offices and got attention for the people. I saw the way the Communists were going about it, and I did the same thing. Only without the noise. I’ve seen them going up to a man waiting in line with a dispossess notice in his hand and grab him. Two weeks later this man is a member of the Unemployed Council

and demonstrating with the rest of them. ‘But they got help for me,’ he tells me. ‘They forced the office to listen to my trouble. I couldn’t have gotten the relief without them.’

“I decided right then and there that what Catholic women who want to work for the cause ought to do was to become members of Catholic Neighborhood Councils. To take up cases in their neighborhoods and work for them.

‘I’ve had my hands full ever since I started some months ago. If I find children sick in the families, I arrange hospital or clinic care for them. I go to see landlords. I go into court with people when they get a dispossession notice, and talk to the judge for them to get a delay so that there will be time for the Relief Office to take care of them.

“There is all sorts of abuse of power in the Home Relief offices, of course. But one can only do what one can.”

July 19 –

Mr. Geiss and Mr. Burke called. Geiss is speaking now at Long Island Depot in Brooklyn, and Mr. Burke is distributing copies of *The Catholic Worker*. Michael Gunn is also helping as a propagandist.

July 20 –

Called on a Catholic lawyer who professed to believe in the frame-up system and the third degree methods of the police. They were necessary, he insisted. This is the sort of Catholic who is held up by the Communists as an example of Church teaching. One such Catholic may do much harm to the Church in the eyes of the man in the street.

July 22 –

An informal gathering of Italians on the front steps discussing the Unemployed Councils and their work. Distributed *The Catholic Worker*.

July 24 –

A Redemptorist Father, born and raised in this neighborhood, dropped into the office to order three hundred copies of *The Catholic Worker* monthly for his parish. He said he wished it was weekly as his was a working class parish and needed the paper.

July 28 –

J Lehane, of Long Island City, a member of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks and a most energetic member of his union, called to get copies of the paper for distribution at local meetings. He said that there were 250 members of the local and only about 25 were regular attendants at the meetings. More activity needed. He told, too, of a friend of his who had worked at the Hotel Montclair, seven days a week, supposedly for seven hours a day, but her hours usually stretched out to ten. When she had to stay home on account of illness she was laid off.

In regard to this question of the seven day week, Pope Leo XIII wrote in his encyclical:

“To consent to any treatment which is calculated to defeat the end and purpose of his being is beyond his (the worker’s) right; he cannot give up his soul to servitude; for it is not man’s own rights which are here in question, but the rights of God, most sacred and inviolable.

“From this follows the obligation of the cessation of work and labor on Sundays and certain festivals.”

Patrick Clare, an Irish Labor Party man, came to the office with copies of the Labor Party paper and talked of a United Front. “Catholics,” he said, “ought not to be afraid of fighting for social justice just because Communists are doing it.”

July 31 –

A call from the mailman. He spoke of the substitutes’ demands for work and the parade they had made on City Hall.

There had been no replacements in the post office service, he said, only the doubling up of work. On his route he covered an atheist book shop where they are very zealous about handing out literature. When they discussed atheism with him he said, “A man is not a man if he does not believe in God.” He himself was a Jew, but he was a believer in the Creator. “Who could make a blade of grass?” he asked the atheist, who replied, “Oh, you’re too smart for me,” and gave up arguing with him.

The next visitor was a chauffeur from the Edison Company who is active in parish work. But as for distributing copies to his fellow employees, “We don’t dare talk about such things. No matter how long you may have worked there, you don’t know where you stand. You never know when you are going to lose your job!”

Oh, the lack of security, the uncertainty as to the future is a sad thing for a grown man with a family, hurtful to his pride and his manhood!

August 9 –

A member of the Workingmens’ Ex-Service League was a caller. His League is a Communist affiliate. Why don’t the Catholics get out and demonstrate against war and against evictions, he wanted to know.

A priest came in while he was talking and he left, but the priest continued the conversation by saying that Catholic laymen should be far more active in studying these questions and expressing themselves on them.



# Chapter 7

## Neighborhood Council In Action

*The Catholic Worker*, Sept 1933, 2.

*Summary: The depression era story of helping a poor woman find and move into a new apartment after being evicted by a heartless landlord for failure to pay rent. (DDLW #268).*

Early in the morning of August 10, Dorothy Weston, Begonia Jimenez and I went over to Mrs. N.'s house to see about her moving. The Marshal was due to come at ten and put her on the street and she didn't want her belongings exposed to the neighborhood. The Unemployed Council (Communist) is interested in making demonstrations and shows up only when the furniture is on the street, so we were trying to be the first on the scene.

With the assistance of Fred Schilling and Raymond Vallely of East 15th Street, we were ready to move her, and the janitor of the house where she was living recommended a house further down the street where the agent was not, she said, so brutal.

The jainitress in the new house had lived there twenty-one years and while she wrote out a receipt for us, we admired the rubber tree which grew in a pot in her front room and reached all the way to the ceiling.

Mrs. N. makes her living by collecting rags and iron from ash cans and selling them. She used to be a jainitress and received an apartment in return for cleaning and taking care of two houses further down on the east side. But she lost her job, and she is now sixty-two years old and there is no chance of her finding anything else. She is all alone save for a huge cat called Rags who is so old that he is toothless. When she opened the door to our knock, he was lying on one of the pantry shelves, looking down sedately and indifferently at the bustle of moving going on around him. For her meals and his, Mrs. N. collects scraps from the First Avenue market, picking up stale vegetables and scraps of meat and fish heads. She does not like to ply her trade of collecting rags during the day, so she sets out at night, continuing her work often until early in the morning. Just the night before, the jainitress said, she had brought in an iron bed and spring at twelve o'clock, making several trips with them. She had had no bed before, sleeping on a bundle of rags on the floor.

Her possessions consisted of trunks and a couple of large baskets of her belongings, a table and chairs, a kitchen range and some kerosene lamps.

She had, used, of course, neither gas nor electricity, not being able to afford these “public” utilities.

“But then most of the people don’t use gas or electricity around here and never have,” the jainitress told us. “I always use a coal stove in the summer and burn wood in it to cook with. I get wood from the Edison people down by the river. They’re always giving away free wood. They’re awfully good.”

A Home Relief investigator stopped by the stoop for a chat. she heard us talking about gas and electricity. “Yes, most of the people never used gas and electric until the city was paying for it,” she said resentfully. She was stopping to leave a ticket for another woman who had nine dogs. “And how I hate to leave a ticket for a woman with nine dogs,” she lamented. “When so many children need milk! But, goodness! what can you do?”

“She’s not so bad as most,” our friend the jainitress commented as the Home Relief worker went on down the street. “She’s real good-hearted. Now the last one they had was a mean thing in spectacles. She wouldn’t sit down in your house. ‘I don’t like bugs,’ she’d say, and ‘won’t you please dust off that chair and put it in the hall?’ ”

As we waited for the moving job to be done, the agent passed us by blackly. Over the phone the day before he had said:

“I don’t care if she has gone to the Home Relief. I wouldn’t take their vouchers anyway. They’re no good, you can’t cash them. Now we’ve got to dispossess the people all over again and it’s putting us to a lot of expense.”

We pointed out that it might be better to let them stay temporarily than go to this expense. But the only reply was, “We carried them—let some one else do it for a while.” They had only carried them a month and a half, we pointed out, but a grunt was the only answer.

“He’s a mean one,” the janitor whispered as he passed. “Know what he’s just gone and done? Cut down all the clothes lines on the roof this morning! How are we going to hang our clothes out now?”

By this time the two boys had all but finished the moving job. Mrs. N. had been transferred from one apartment to another with decency and dispatch. For another month at least she can live without a harsh agent forever at the door, bulldozing and threatening her with the streets.

# Chapter 8

## Are Newmann Clubs Enough?

*The Catholic Worker*, Oct 1933, 1, 10.

*Summary: Interview with a Jesuit regarding catechesis for Catholic students in public high schools. Quotes a Newman Club worker who complains that the students won't come unless there is a dance. (DDLW #270).*

"I first became interested in Newman Clubs," said Father John Corbett, S.J., in a recent interview, "when I was stationed at Fordham, across the street from Theodore Roosevelt High School, and discovered the shocking number of Catholic children there who were receiving no sort of religious instruction.

"There was a Newman Club, of course, but when I inquired into its work, I found that it was purely social. 'You can't get the kids here if you're going to preach to them,' the teacher in charge of it told me. 'You have to give dances for them.'

"So you have a situation where either the Newman Clubs are distinctly religious in character – and then only those children come who would not neglect their religious training anyway; or else you have Newman Clubs which are organizations for giving dances and having a Communion Breakfast once a year."

Father Corbett spoke of one zealous Catholic teacher in George Washington High School who knows every Catholic in her school personally and sees that they get to Confession at least once a month, who gives her time to interesting their parents and pastors in their duty of providing real religious training for them, and who arranges lectures for her Newman Club by priests at least once a month on subjects connected with liturgy or dogma. Another teacher in Bryant High School brings her club once a month to the Cenacle convent, where they have a religious instruction, go to Confession, and finish with Benediction a day spent in truly religious surroundings.

"There are other teachers in other schools, too," he said, "Who give generously of their time and energy in their efforts to counteract the purely secular training of the public schools. But that is not the true answer to the problem. The answer lies with the pastors of parishes. It is they who have the facilities for providing religious instruction. And it is they, not the teachers in the public schools, who have the responsibility before God.

“There should be one priest appointed for the diocese whose sole work would be the religious education of public school children. It would be up to him to delegate a priest in each parish to register the children there attending public schools. He would aid in the organization of weekly classes for them, receive reports from the parishes on the work being done, and guard the religious welfare of the children in the public schools themselves by his authority and knowledge of the situation.”

It is not an answer to say, as many priests do, continued Father Corbett, that all Catholic children should be in Catholic schools. Obviously, the Catholic schools could not begin to accommodate them all. But we have weekly instruction classes for children in the public elementary schools, and there is no reason, he contends, why the work of the parishes should stop there; religious instruction should be related with the other subjects taught the children, to offset the evil effects of non-religious or anti-religious teaching given them, especially in such subjects as biology, history, and economics.

“I would insist,” he said, “that each child in the upper classes of the public high schools get a copy of the four great Papal Encyclicals – the one on marriage, that on education, and the two on labor and social justice, each of which may be obtained for ten cents from the Paulist Press – and be instructed in the meaning and implications of them. And Catholic children should be supplied with examination outlines, especially in history, which show the Church in its true light in relation to civilization, in place of the decidedly Protestant outlines now used by most of the children with the tacit consent of their teachers.”

I asked Father Corbett if any parishes provided such religious training for public high school children.

“Well,” he replied, “when Bishop Kearney was pastor up at St. Francis Xavier’s Church here in the Bronx he was an active and effective worker in this cause. And Father Strugnell at St. Thomas Aquinas’ Church has a list of all the children in his parish attending public schools and sees that they receive regular instruction. There is a Father Edward J. Donovan, too, of St. Aloysius Church, out in Great Neck, Long Island, who has worked out these suggestions with great success. As for the others – I don’t want to make any sweeping statements, but there was a letter in the Brooklyn *Tablet* not so long ago asking about parish study clubs or instruction classes for public school children. And there wasn’t a single answer.”

# Chapter 9

## The Listener - October 1933

*The Catholic Worker*, Oct 1933, 7.

*Summary: Miscellaneous musings about child labor, study clubs, mimeographed newspapers issued by altar boys. (DDLW #274).*

Although we have seen many copies of mimeographed papers put out by zealous Communist young people, the first one we have seen done by Catholics was brought in to us by Edwin F. Britton. It is called *The Magnet*, and is “a monthly published by the altar boys of Our Lady of Guadalupe Council of the Knights of the Divine Child, to inspire Catholic Action.” Its editor is Mr. Britton, who does the hard work of mimeographing it every month, devoting his evenings to the work, for he is employed during the day in a jewelry store. The motto of the paper is, “We want a Daily Press.” It is an eight-page paper with a bright rose cover, attractively made up and containing stories, editorials, jokes and poems. The copy he showed us was Volume 3, No. 24. This is a splendid piece of neighborhood action and we earnestly advise other young Catholics in schools and parishes to follow Mr. Britton’s example. He said if anyone wanted to find out how it can be done to call on him or write to him at 256 West 15th Street.

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We refer study clubs and schools who want literature on international peace to the Catholic Association for International Peace, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. Miss Sweeney there will advise as to pamphlets and leaflets and study club outlines for classes.

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Miss Kelley, a high school teacher and a member of the Teacher’s Union, dropped into our office last month and was telling us about the activities of the Communists in the Union, and their tactics of prolonging meetings until everyone is so exhausted that they have control

of the situation and can carry things their way. She was urging that every Catholic teacher join the Union in order to fight Communist teachers in the public schools.

Another Catholic teacher says that there are several teachers' organizations and that it is hard to belong to all of them and to pay dues to all of them.

Miss Kelley also told about working some years ago in a summer school, having the afternoon sessions, and about a little boy who always came to school so tired that he fell asleep at his desk. She investigated and found that he was working in a laundry as a sorter from seven to eleven so that he arrived at school in a state of exhaustion. She informed the proper authorities of the case and the little boy was able to give up his grueling work.

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We have found a good and enthusiastic friend in Mollie Callanan, of Buffalo, New York, who heard about the paper up at the Cenacle of St. Regis and came down to see us. She immediately volunteered to help us and took papers down to Wall Street to distribute after the talks there. Another day she arrived at the office to get copies to distribute in Union Square. She had heard of Dorothy Weston's experience in the Square when she went to distribute papers in preparation for the meeting of the unemployed. Dorothy had been set upon and argued with (and to argue with her the Communists found it necessary to grab her by both arms, so she was almost torn limb from limb) and when she extricated herself from the milling mob, most of whom wanted copies of the paper and some half dozen of whom wanted to prevent the others from taking it, she found her chic nose veil ripped from its moorings and askew over one eye. Mollie declared herself ready for anything, but on the day set for her appearance in Union Square it poured rain and she had to forego her apostolate to the Communists, for this visit to New York at least.

We got an invigorating letter from her on her return to Buffalo in which she tells us of a Sister Fabian, "a live-wire nun who is moving mountains in a quiet way." We enjoyed the mixed metaphors.

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Our friend J. Lehane of Long Island City came in during the month with another union man, both of them offering to serve in eviction cases, help to move furniture, or assist The Catholic Worker in any way they could. We talked of the railroad – he belongs to the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks – and Mr. Lehane pointed out that if more men had been employed on the railroads, the Erie wreck, where so many were killed last month, would not have occurred.

# Chapter 10

## All In a Day

*The Catholic Worker*, Oct 1933, 5, 6.

*Summary: Commentary on a parade for labor organizing, labor leaders, strikes around the country, and advertising to increase consumption. Recommends voluntary sacrifices and gifts to the poor. Suggests study clubs use the Gospels, a newspaper, and Papal encyclicals for their material. (DDLW #272).*

There is column after column in the news about the NRA parade, which lasted from one-thirty in the afternoon until almost midnight. We should have been in it, but there was too little time to organize our forces. With two people doing everything in the office of *The Catholic Worker*, days are crowded enough. Our hours are from nine in the morning to eleven at night often, and we regret we are unable to sign a code as to hours or wages.

I took the time, however, to go up to Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street at four o'clock in the afternoon to see the crowds. Forty-second Street from Times Square over to the avenue was jammed with spectators, many of them walking in the middle of the street. Bryant Park, which is beginning to be built up again after having been taken away from the people (there is a story of city graft here) looks like a large vacant lot. Slabs of stone along the sidelines look like fallen tombstones. Women and children were sitting picknicking in the park though it was closed off, and the police were so busy on the Avenue that they let them be. The grass was high in some places and ragged boys played as if they were out on the quiet prairies.

Poor Mayor O'Brien got a lot of booing from the stock exchange on account of his tax program, and due to confusion in the parade-traffic the booers were able to keep it up for eighteen minutes. Why should one man be made the goat?

Every now and then some woman fainted in the melee and a motorcycle policeman put her in his little basket on the side and sped away with her dropping over the side and looking to be in imminent danger of a broken neck.

It may be indelicate to mention it, but we are afraid the people who were unwinding rolls of toilet paper from office windows at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street were showing just as hostile a spirit as the booers of Mayor O'Brien. In fact, we are inclined to believe that they might have been motivated by a bolshevik spirit. Page the D.A.R. and Hamilton Fish.

\* \* \*

At the same time my daily paper tells me that R. P. Lamont is resigning from the Steel and Iron Institute and Charlie Schwab, that notorious enemy of labor, is going to take his place. Ham Fish might get after Schwab as being one of the causes of Communism in this country. Schwab has been fighting labor unions for many, many years now, and making generous gifts to the church at the same time. Wouldn't it be swell if these gifts were rejected with thanks? I'd rather worship in such a store as Father Cornelius Ahern officiates in when he says Mass for his Negro congregations over in Newark than in the finest church in the world, built with the money sweated from miners and miners' children and wives. I admit that many such gifts of ill-gotten money are accepted by priests and sisters who know nothing of the labor situation in this country and who have never been told. And I admit that the institutions built with such money, for instance the splendid property and building down on Staten Island which Schwab donated as an orphanage, are productive of much good in that they have taken care of countless thousands of poor children. But how sad and how terrible a thing it is that some children are sweated and starved and that it is from their ragged pockets that the money is filched to house the others. Not to feed them. The good sisters always see to that themselves.

[As we go to press the papers state that Schwab will not succeed Lamont, but the above comment may still be pertinent.—Ed.]

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"Germans to pare one meal a month to feed jobless," is another headline. Yesterday, while I wandered around town to view the parade, I was disheartened at the sight of so many women in the tea shops and luncheon places, spending so much money on so little, and eating so many unnecessary things when so many are going hungry. It wouldn't hurt any of them to practice *agere contrawhen* they are tempted to indulge in an orgy of sweets. The Germans are going to pare one meal a month off their diet. Why can't we go them one better, or four better, and pare off one meal a week and give that money to charity? Or not even one meal, but one afternoon tea, which usually comes to fifty or sixty cents.

\* \* \*

General Johnson says (I am still reading the day's news), "As for the American Federation of Labor. . . we realize that they represent only a small proportion of all the workers whose rights it is our duty to conserve. They represent workers only to the extent that workers choose them for that function."

Much as I deplore the dual-union idea which the A.F. of L. has been fighting for years, I hope that this remark of Johnson's indicates that the Progressive Miners of Illinois, who have been



fighting the United Miners for years on the grounds of corrupt leadership, will be recognized by the Administration.

\* \* \*

I am still on the front page of the *Times*, and it is giving me great opportunity for editorial comment. Also by this column I am indicating what I consider to be the best way to work in a study club. Just take the Gospels, a newspaper, the Papal encyclicals, and get to work.

On the next column there is discussion of retail codes, a section of which bars “inaccurate advertising.” This leads to another training of thought, as to how advertising is responsible for much misery today. Our Holy Father advocates thrift, but is it thrifty to be taken in by advertisements? Isn’t there an element of greed in the desire to have, for instance, new linoleums, electric refrigerators, new radios, new cars? The poorest of the poor are taught to spend their money on these things when their actual subsistence is so insecure that they never know when they buy a thing on the instalment plan whether they are going to have a job six months hence so that they can continue paying for it. Why not a little more of the Franciscan ideal of holy poverty? Who not a little more disdain of the unnecessaries of life? Food, clothing and shelter – these are necessities. And if we have these we can see our way clear to studying for a better social order by which we may obtain those other, we admit, delightful unnecessaries.

When we talk of speculation, it isn’t only the bankers on Wall Street who fall into that category. It is also every man who speculates in the future of his children by an avid desire to have what the other fellow has.

Of course, in this we are going against the N R A, which calls for faith and more buying. Why not faith and more charity – that is, giving to the poor to enable them to buy?

There is a great advertising campaign on now. Buy now because prices are going up. Owen D. Young, on page four of the *Times* says: “Capital which over-reaches for profits, labor which over-reaches for wages, or a public which over-reaches for bargains will all destroy each other. . . There should be earnings enough to pay not only a living wage but a cultural wage. . . Often behind an apparent bargain lurks a threat to somebody’s savings, or somebody’s labor, or to the buyer himself in a skimmed product.”

\* \* \*

Johnson says Ford is observing the code and as long as he does no steps will be taken. So the precedent has been set of one person holding out for rugged individualism. Not so good. But then I heard the other day of a bank president who told a friend of ours that he flew the blue eagle for business purposes and that anyone can get around the agreements who wanted to. That bank president is not only a rugged individualist but a hypocrite.

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Thirty-five thousand miners are striking again in Pennsylvania. They call it a holiday now (sixteen were shot later in the day). The strike of the miners in Utah and New Mexico has been put in the news at last. It has been going on for weeks, with thousands out, wholesale arrests of hundreds, but the capitalist press has ignored it.

A white goods strike of 35,000 going on in and around New York. There is a silk strike of 60,000 workers in Paterson and Passaic, where the radical union, the National Textile Workers, is in command of the situation. Anne Burlak, the leader of the National Textile Workers' Union, refuses to sit down to arbitrate with Thomas McMahon, of the United Textile Workers, accusing him of selling out the workers. It is true that McMahon has sat with bankers and Chamber of Commerce officials more than he has sat with workers in recent years. It is true he is a member of the National Civic Federation, which the United Mine Workers (A.F. of L.) Holds is an enemy of labor. The U.M.W. in its constitution forbids any member of its organization to be a member of the Federation. So how does McMahon, also A.F. of L., get that way?

Anne Burlak is apt to have the workers with her, because she is a fine, strapping young girl, blond-haired, rosy cheeked, looking like a Valkyrie as she marches at the head of her strikers. She led the Hunger Marchers down to Washington last year and wherever there is a strike she rushes to the fore. What she's really out for is a good time, otherwise she'd work with the established union and do some of the much-needed organizing work among the southern textile mills, for instance. But she prefers the obstructionist tactics of the Communist Party.

# Chapter 11

## Is Picketing a Crime?

*The Catholic Worker*, Oct 1933, 5.

*Summary: Unjust injunctions persecute striking workers in New Jersey. (DDLW #271).*

An immediate example of the evils of company unionism is shown in the strike of the uniform workers in Red Bank, N.J. Two injunctions were issued by a judge in Red Bank, one to the Sigmund Eisner Company (and the head of the company is a volunteer worker for the NRA in his city) and the other to the company union. The strikers under the injunction are not allowed to talk to any worker who may be willing to become employed by the firm, not allowed to address any employee either on the streets, at their homes or in any public place. The strikers are not permitted to tell anyone there is a strike on, nor allowed to display signs, nor to picket.

“Peculiar is this judicial logic,” says the Amalgamated Clothing Workers’ monthly paper. “While these workers were satisfied to work for \$2, \$3 and \$4 per week in this sweat shop, no judge interested himself in their welfare. They could even work sixty to seventy hours a week in an attempt to make seven or eight dollars a week, and labor and factory laws of the state could be ignored and violated daily. But no judge became interested in upholding the majesty of the law. But the moment those sweated workers struck and started to put up a fight under the banner of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers for decent wages and working conditions, the judge suddenly became interested in seeing to it that the letter of every law on the books was lived up to.”

The strikers are continuing their picketing and awaiting a decision from the National Labor Board.

# Chapter 12

## Day After Day

*The Catholic Worker*, November 1933, 1,2.

*Summary: Contrasts society's concern for animals and sill "high society" games with the plight of those being evicted. Urges readers to petition against evictions. (DDLW #197).*

A deer gets trapped on a hillside and every effort is brought to bear to rescue him from his predicament. The newspapers carry daily features.

Mrs. A. with her four children and unemployed husband living on \$1.50 a week, is trapped by economic circumstances and everyone is so indifferent that it took three or four afternoons of Mike Gunn's time to see to it that the Home Relief came to the rescue. Though Mike has enough to do with his Labor Guild over in Brooklyn, he was doing his bit as part of the Fifteenth Street Neighborhood Council.

Three little pigs are crowded into a too-small cage, the case is brought into court, the judge's findings in the case being that pigs should not be crowded the way subway riders are. And a family of eight children, mother and father, are crowded in three rooms and the consensus of opinion is that they're lucky to have that and why don't they practice birth control anyway.

One of the Home Relief workers came in the other day and was voicing just such sentiments. She was absolutely unacquainted with Catholic teaching on birth control and abortion, and we forced her to listen to a lecture on the subject which, though it may not have convinced her, at least served the purpose of toning down her propaganda among unemployed families, we hope.

A scavenger hunt is the latest game of "Society." An hilarious pastime, the New York *Times* society reporter calls it, and describes in two and one half columns the asinine procedure of several hundred society and literary figures, guests at a party at the Waldorf-Astoria, surging forth on a chase through the highways and byways of Manhattan Island. "The scavenger hunt of last night brought an enthusiastic response even from persons whose appetites for diversion are ordinarily jaded." The hunt was a search through the city streets for a "ridiculously heterogeneous list of articles."

Any morning before and after Mass and straight on through the day there is a "scavenger hunt" going on up and down Fifteenth Street outside the windows of THE CATHOLIC

WORKER and through all the streets of the city. People going through garbage and ash cans to see what they can find in the way of a heterogeneous list of articles. The *Times* does not state what these things were, but probably the list was made up of something delightfully and quaintly absurd such as old shoes, bits of string, cardboard packing boxes, wire, old furniture, clothing and food.

If the several hundred guests at the Waldorf had to scavenge night after night and morning after morning, the hunt would not have such an enthusiastic response.

Teresa, aged seven, member of the Fifteenth Street Neighborhood Council, took part in her first eviction the other day. She had a cold and was staying home from school in order to keep out in the air, it being a balmy day, so she had her chance to help.

The Friday before, a Home Relief worker from 22<sup>nd</sup> Street came to the office to get aid for a woman and child who were being evicted from a decrepit flat in one of the tenements of William Horn (31 Union Square). There were five stalwart friends of The Catholic Worker in the office at the time, Harry Crimmins, Frank O'Donnell, Tom Coddington, William Walsh, and a Mr. Powers from Atlantic City who came to inquire about the work of the paper and stayed to help.

Understanding that the eviction was at three in the afternoon, we sallied forth, but when we got there, the landlord's agent had called off his men, expecting us to do the job of putting the woman out, and thus saving him eighteen dollars.

We refused to move the woman's furniture until it had been brought down by the marshal. We explained to the agent that often a landlord who was unwilling to accept a Home Relief voucher offered to move the family himself, paying five dollars to a neighborhood truckman rather than eighteen to the marshal. This agent, standing sneering and scoffing by the door, refused to do anything.

"You have no sympathy for landlords, have you?" he wanted to know.

We assured him that our sympathy was rather with the weaker party. Alright then, he would call the marshal! The eviction would be the following Monday then, at three o'clock.

It was hard to understand his unwillingness to have the poor woman moved. It was as though he delighted in the idea of heaping humiliation on her.

Monday came, and the relief worker hastened around to the office, to tell us that the marshal was about to arrive, though it was only one, not three in the afternoon. Only Harry Crimmins, Teresa, Dorothy Weston and I were in the office, so leaving Dorothy to mind the office, the three of us sallied out.

Several police and huskies were standing at the door of the tenement to greet what they thought was going to be a delegation of Communists, only to meet instead seven-year-old Teresa, Harry Crimmins and me. They dissolved into thin air. (It is a wonder they wouldn't stay and help us.)

Teresa carried toys, pieces of the baby's crib, and Harry Crimmins and I managed the rest. The Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart, a community of nuns who run a day nursery and do visiting work in the neighborhood promised to keep an eye on our evicted friend—she is a

Protestant—taking charge of her two-year-old child while she works as a dishwasher for seven a week.

This is only one of the dozen eviction cases we have had in the last month. We have moved Jews, Protestants, and Catholics. A German livery stable man loaned us his horse and wagon to move a Jewish neighbor. Jews, Protestants and Catholics have helped us by contributing clothes, furniture and their services.

We call our readers' attention to the petition published in this issue against evictions which we urge you to clip out, attach to a sheet of paper and send back filled with the signatures of men, women and children who protest against this injustice.

# Chapter 13

## Nation-wide Strikes Advance. . .

*The Catholic Worker*, Nov 1933, 1, 6.

*Summary: Accounts of various strikes around the country, the difficulties of labor organizing, and violence against strikers. (DDLW #275).*

### Brutal Injuries and Teargas Are Police Answer to Defenceless Women and Child Pickets

#### JURY OUT OF DATE

12,000 School Children Are Forced to Scab In Cotton Strike, While California Schools Close

A few highlights in the news of strikes:

The strike of 5,000 employees in the Ford Edgewater, N. J. and Chester, Pa. plants drags on. In a telegram to the NRA, Ford declares that his company has never discriminated “against any applicant for employment on the ground of his affiliation with labor unions or otherwise.” (According to Administrator Johnson on October 27, “Edsel Ford told me they would never accept collective bargaining of any kind.”) In Detroit, the strike of 7,000 die and tool makers threatens to stop the entire auto industry. It will be remembered that a similar strike there last winter actually succeeded, for the first time in the history of American labor, in halting all work in a major industry. The previous strike was led by Communists, and fed by police brutality. An interesting comment on the present labor troubles is that more than 6,000 anti-Ford votes were cast in a recent election in Dearborn, at which the United Front Party, led by the Communist Party, succeeded in nominating its mayoralty candidate and four others in the non-partisan primaries. As we go to press, it is reported that Ford has announced he will be obliged to lay off 9,000 workers a week to conform to the 35-hour week provision of the auto code. Administrator Johnson offered to except the Ford plants from this provision, but Ford failed to reply.

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**Three striking cotton pickers in California were killed and a score injured, many seriously, by armed growers,** apparently abetted by police. The evidence is unanimous that the strikers employed only peaceful picketing along the highways. A score of strikers have been jailed on charges of criminal syndicalism, inciting to riot, etc., in an effort to break the strike. The Federated Press reports that, **12,000 school children in the strike area were forced to act as scabs and pick the crop, the schools closing for two days.** The cotton growers complained to Secretary Wallace that "the bountiful use of federal funds for welfare relief is making it more pleasant and desirable for labor to accept charity than to work," and it is now reported that all federal relief to strikers has been withdrawn.

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"There is no place in this town for Russian anarchists, cutthroats, Reds and murderers. In some places they take men like these out and hang them. \*\*Don't be too sure they won't do it yet, right here.\*\*" These were the law-abiding phrases uttered from the bench by Judge J. H. Solkmore of Lodi, Cal., at a hearing of six organizers arrested during the grape pickers' strike there. When the defendants asked for a jury trial the judge replied, "The jury system is a relic of mediaeval times, the recourse of guilty men who want to escape justice."

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**One man was killed and at least 16 pickets and bystanders seriously wounded, including a small boy struck in the head,** when over 200 deputies using guns, clubs and tear- gas swept down the main street of Ambridge, Pa., in an attempt to break the steel strike there. An unusual Pathe newsreel depicting deputies firing into the picket lines resulted in editorials denouncing the action of Ambridge officials even in the conservative New York *Herald Tribune* and *Times*. Said the *Herald Tribune*: "the whole initiative, in this photographic record, comes from the side of the 'law.' It is not a pleasant picture, and strongly suggests one reason why Pennsylvania has found it so difficult to maintain industrial order."

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After two weeks of attacks by teargas and clubs of police, used indiscriminately on men, women and children in the picket lines and among onlookers, the strike of the workers of the National Steel Company at Weirton, W. Va., has been broken, and the bosses' fight for open shops in the steel industry strengthened. E. T. Weir, president of the company, won for



himself the pleasant nickname of “Shoot-A-Few” Weir by his remark, “We may have to shoot a few these men to end this strike.”

Nine silk strikers in Patterson, N. J., were shot, three of them seriously, when uniformed police and company thugs fired into the picket line. This is the third month of the silk strike, which now includes over 70,000 workers and has tied up the industry in New Jersey, New York City, Pennsylvania and parts of New England. At a recent hearing before Deputy Administrator Whiteside of the NRA, Ann Burlak, organizer for the National Textile Workers’ Union (Communist), warned that the strike could not be compromised: “We will write the settlement terms on the picket line.”

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The coal sections of the country continue restless, as the operators continue opposition to collective bargaining. A general strike of all miners in the northern Pennsylvania hard-coal field was barely prevented by the pleas of President Thomas Maloney of the United Anthracite Miners of Pennsylvania and Rev. J. J. Curran, a Catholic priest of Wilkes-Barre, before a convention of the U. A. M. P. Father Curran openly expressed his sympathy with the miners and with their union. **One delegate showed an unopened pay envelope containing the pay of 1 cent for two weeks work**, due to deductions of \$98.99 for powder, tools, etc. from his “earnings” of \$99. Another delegate told the story of several miners and their request for a mule to drag out rails from an old working place. The boss refused the mule, saying: “You’ll have to do it yourselves, it’s a little dangerous to risk a mule up there . . .” **In the Colorado coal field, the first company union in America, that of John D. Rockefeller in the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, has been doomed** by a vote of 877 to 273 in favor of the United Mine Workers of America. The company had refused to permit the taking of a vote in 1917, and refused to recognize the U. M. W. A. in the strikes of 1919 and 1922, although the men followed the lead of the trade union against the company union.

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The Berkshire Mills at Reading, Pa., citadel of open shop interests in the hosiery industry, has been forced to yield to the demands of its workers for collective bargaining after strikes of thousands of organized and unorganized workers.

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More than 4,500 silk dress workers walked out in Los Angeles after a strike call was issued by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. More than 40% of the 6,000 workers, it is charged, are receiving less than \$5 a week. This brings the number of California strikers to

more than 25,000 including 12,000 cotton pickers, 1,800 sardine fishermen, 2,300 lettuce and tomato field workers and several hundred stevedores.

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Martial "law" still reigns at Gallup, N. M., where miners are joining the Communist National Miners Union and deserting the United Mine Workers, the John L. Lewis organization. In the eleventh week of the strike, organizers are being sentenced by court-martial and held in jail under appalling conditions, picketing is forbidden, armed strikebreakers are being deputized to attack strikers.

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In the beet fields of Colorado, **where child labor in its worst forms is still the general rule**, the workers are striking in desperation against wages of as little as four cents an hour for a back-breaking day that extends from sunrise to sunset. (For an analysis of the situation in the beet-sugar industry, see the article by Father Gleason in the November 4th issue of *America*.)

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**The cotton mill strike of 2,100 in New Orleans is broken after police shoot down and arrest scores of strikers . . .** In Ashboro, N. C., the striking workers of the Bossong Hosiery Mills win a remarkable victory after a two-week struggle, winning full union recognition and a 25% wage increase . . . The workers of the Willimantic Silk Co. of Willimantic, Conn., win a wage increase in excess of their demands after a nine-week struggle.

# Chapter 14

## No Continuing City

*The Catholic Worker*, Nov 1933, p. 5

*Summary: In a fiction-like style, tells a story of Mary Blount, a wife and working-class mother who goes to the city hospital clinic for a prenatal checkup. She begins the day joyfully, but ends experiencing indignity and cruelty from the nurses who fail to listen to her and understand her need for modesty. (DDLW #936).*

Down in a dim basement apartment underneath that of Monica's, Mary and Joe Blount lived.

Gerry was nestling up to her mother. Mary was putting her to bed, and Joe Blount, her husband, a small man with an engaging face, stood in his work clothes and watched them.

Gerry was six years old and very vivacious around bedtime. She liked to sniff at her mother's arms, her neck. "You smell like a little baby cow. You smell like a loaf of bread." Gerry playfully bit at her mother.

Joe did not much care for this love-making between Gerry and his wife. He wanted a little attention himself. He clutched his wife as she passed him.

"Give us a kiss, Mary."

"Can't you see I'm busy?"

"You're always busy. You pay too much attention to the kid. I want you."

"You always want me." But she smiled at him.

"I'm glad another's coming."

"Gee, a woman likes to hear her man say that—"

"You'll belong more to me then."

"How do you get that way? I'll be busier than ever with two kids and the janitor work besides."

"Well, you won't be giving it all to Gerry. With two it's just kids. Not the kid. You'll think more of me then."

"Joe, I couldn't think more of you."

Mary was a big comfortable woman and she liked to be compared to a little baby cow. She thought it sweet of Gerry. Her hair was reddish gold and her skin was milky white. She was deep-chested and placid and worked hard with her husband. The two of them earned forty dollars a week, and that of course was a lot of money, but then they had to pay rent besides.

Mary intended to have her baby in the public ward of the hospital just as she had had Peter. It would cost her only thirty dollars and she would put up with the inconvenience of going to the clinic and being in the ward with thirty other women. Her friend, Jenny, who kept a rooming house next door, always paid out one hundred and fifty dollars for each of her children. What with births and deaths that family was always in debt.

A few months before the baby was due, Mary set off one afternoon, leaving Gerry to play with Monica. It was a windy cold afternoon in October, with the smell of rain in the air. Mary bowed her head before the wind and clutched her coat closely about her against the unaccustomed cold. The dust and cold brought tears to her eyes. But it was good after the long hot summer and the torrid days of September.

It was good, too, to be having a holiday from the house at such an unwonted time. To be free and walking the streets when she was usually washing out tiled halls and collecting trash.

She would be having these little holidays now every other week until the child was born, and then a good long holiday of ten days in which to rejoice in a leisurely fashion over her blessings.

Suddenly Mary felt hungry. She was always a small eater in spite of her size, and lately the warm, close house and the smell of food in the halls and garbage in the airshafts took away her appetite. She thought that it would add to the holiday spirit to drop into a bakery lunch room and have a bowl of soup.

It would be a reckless expenditure of money, but now that Mary realized it, she was very hungry indeed. She would never be able to sit through several long hours at the clinic without a bite to eat.

So she stopped in a Jewish bakery lunch room and ordered herself a bowl of beet borscht. It was hot and sweet and there was a flaky potato in the center of the dish. She did not order the rolls and pat of sweet butter, because that would cost an extra ten cents. The soup was fifteen.

The clinic was not far away now, and when she went on she did not feel the cold so much. She was only a little late, and after she had been given her ticket of admission to the clinic, she found herself tenth in line and the doctors already there. Usually they were an hour or so late.

She settled herself down on a bench, comfortably preparing herself to listen and join in the talk of the other mothers. She had had these nice times before when she had had Peter. Good, sociable times once a week, as good as a sewing circle, better, because the women were unanimous in their interests.

"I swore the next time I had one I'd have it at home," one woman was saying. "But here I am again. In some ways it's more comfortable at home and in some ways it ain't. It's the food and sleep mostly. I used to get so hungry in the hospital. Corned beef and cabbage

handed me an hour after the kid was born. A rotten egg every morning and lukewarm coffee! Gee, what wouldn't I have given for something piping hot?"

"Don't I know it!" another chimed in. "It was a good thing they let ye have visitors every day, otherwise ye'd starve."

"Yeah, I had my last at home, too," a young girl was saying. She was a little thing and pretty in a fragile way. "It was the sleepin' and eatin' I was thinkin' of. But they was twins—and a devil a lot of sleepin' I did at home. I'd thought that my husband could help me, poor lamb. 'This is your work, ain't it?' I said to him. 'You put 'em there, didn't you? Well, you can stick around then and help!' They was born ten minutes apart, one of 'em yelling, and the other blue. The doctor wrapped them both in cotton—they were too little to put any clothes on—and put them in front of the oven. One of 'em always seemed to have the worst of it. They was fighting inside like they been fighting ever since."

"I'll bet you'll be glad to get away since."

"I'll bet you'll be glad to get away from them for a while, having another," Mary said.

"Yes, it'll be a little rest. I've got two besides the twins and I had 'em both here. Do you remember how they used to wake you up at four o'clock to give you a basin to wash your face?"

"Wonder if Miss Springer, that jolly nurse, is here yet. She was a nice one. Hey, Aggie, do you remember how when you and me was here last time she mixed our babies up just for fun? She was a jolly soul. But I was mad like hell. The fright she gave me."

"We're months apart this time."

The talk went on, and in groups of four, the women were called into the clinic. Within an hour Mary's turn had come.

The doctors did a lot of laughing and talking as they worked about. Nurses went in and out among the screened cubicles.

Mary was given a sheet and told to undress.

She was proceeding briskly, glad that her turn had come, when she discovered that the sheet which had been given her was far too small for her large body. She was a modest soul, and very shy, so it was with difficulty that she could bring herself to put her head out between the curtains and ask one of the nurses passing by for another sheet.

The nurse was busy and tossed her head as she passed.

Mary hated to stand there with her head poking out between the screens. She felt grotesque, laughable, and since she was a dignified woman the situation was humiliating.

She put her head out again, and catching at another nurse as she passed, she asked again for a larger sheet.

"Do with what you've got," the nurse said testily.

"But it doesn't cover me," Mary said miserably.

The nurse paid no further attention and Mary sat down on the little stool inside the cubicle and tried to control her trembling. She was not angry. She scarcely knew what it was to be angry, but she was shaking with shame and humiliation.

She suddenly thought of the black-faced men she had seen at an amusement park, sticking their heads out from holes in canvases for people to throw balls at. She felt similarly exposed to blows as she once more put her head out. She felt grotesque not only in the scant child's sheet which she clutched about her breast, but in having to put her head out and try to get attention.

"Please," she kept saying, her face red and contorted with shame. "Please, miss—please, nurse!"

The spirit of perversity among the nurses was contagious. The first two had refused to heed her and the other three did likewise. It seemed as though Mary would have to go out into the examination room with two other women with no other covering but the tiny child's sheet which by some miserable chance had been given her.

"Please, nurse. Please, doctor. I can't come out like this," she begged, her eyes full of tears. She was in an agony of nervousness. Her hands were cold and clammy. She could feel perspiration running between her shoulder blades.

"What's wrong with her, anyway?" one nurse complained.

"What's that woman in there beefing about?"

"It's another sheet she must have. She doesn't like the fit of that one."

"Tell her to shop over on Fifth Avenue. Probably she'll get a better fit over there."

"But it won't cover me," Mary sobbed.

The nurses only laughed.

Mary sat on the little stool in the cubicle while the long minutes passed. She was forced to submit to their cruelty. But she felt that happiness had gone out of life. All the pleasure she had felt in the new life that was in her had fled. The pride in her increasing girth seemed ridiculous now. She thought of her calm happiness of an hour ago, her pathetic pleasure in the holiday, her greedy delight in the bowl of soup, in the conversation of the women outside, and she thought what a blind fool she had been to find the world such a good place.

She felt tiny and debased, and from her small suffering she realized the magnitude of the world's sorrow. It was not a good place, this world; it was full of jeering laughter. She sat on the stool and wept.

# Chapter 15

## Thanksgiving

*The Catholic Worker*, Nov 1933, p. 4

*Summary: Expresses gratitude for many contributions as the circulation of the paper has grown to 20,000. There is a melancholy mood with the coming of Winter. Reflects on the price of grapes and how that will affect the Italian wine-makers in the neighborhood. Raises the question of whether Fascism endangers religion. (DDLW #935).*

## Thanksgiving

The first week of November was an exciting week, what with a petition going out on All Souls' Day (it was an inspiration received at Holy Mass that very morning) and enough replies within forty-eight hours to pay off last month's printing bill.

Other contributions came in the form of food, including honey, coffee, and a succulent apple pie, daffodil bulbs for the back garden, cookies and cakes for our tea which was held during the course of the month, baskets of fruit and a coal stove, and enough furniture for the office and half a dozen unemployed families.

Last but not least, friendly editors, such as Father Harold Purcell, editor of *The Sign*, who collected the first eleven dollars towards THE CATHOLIC WORKER, have given the paper space in their columns: *The Rosary* published an article about it in the November issue; and *The Prairie Messenger*, published by the Benedictine Fathers in Saskatchewan, Canada, ran entire a letter we sent out to all schools and academies.

The circulation this month in the new format is 20,000 copies, and we would not have achieved this growth if it had not been for the help of our unemployed friends who have given us of their time, strength and prayers most unstintingly.

It is impossible to list the favors and help we have received. We can only pray in turn that God will bless our friends and well-wishers.

## And Now a Note of Melancholy

Late fall is here. A haze hangs over the city. Fogs rise from the river, and the melancholy note of the river boats is heard at night. The leaves are dropping from the fig tree in the back yard. There is the smell of chestnuts in the air, and if you buy the chestnuts, most of them are wormy. It is better to make popcorn over the fire at night. For we have fires now. The kettle sings on the range in the kitchen (the range cost eight dollars second-hand and doesn't burn much coal), and visitors to THE CATHOLIC WORKER office are drinking much tea and coffee. The stove in the front office has burst in its exuberance and has to be mended with stove clay and a piece of tin.

And there is also the smell of grapes in the air—rich, luscious Concord grapes. If this editorial has a melancholy note, it is not because chestnuts are wormy or because the stove has cracked, but because all our Italian neighbors are too poor this year to buy grapes and make wine. Grapes that used to be one dollar a box are now one dollar fifty. And the Italian fathers who love their wine and have it in lieu of fresh vegetables and fruits all during the long winter, are still out of jobs or on four-day-a-month work relief; and this year there is no pleasant smell of fermenting grapes, no disorderly heaps of mash dumped in the gutters.

And Mr. Rubino and Mr. Scaratino and Mr. Liguori will not rent a wine press together this year, and the children will not hang over them with breathless interest in the mysterious basement while they manipulate the press rented for the house.

And, what is worse, Mr. Rubino will not be dropping into the office of THE CATHOLIC WORKER, when he sees our light late at night, to console us for our long hours by the gift of a milk bottle of wine.

For the long hard winter is before us. Evictions are increasing, people come in to ask us to collect winter clothes and to help them find apartments where relief checks will be accepted.

We must work, and we must pray, and we meditate as we write this that it would be so much easier for all our Italian friends to work and pray, to have courage to fight and also to be patient, if they could make as usual their fragrant and cheering grape wine.

## From the “Commonweal”

“It is this growth of militant atheism—of a contagious spirit of the repudiation of all forms of belief in God—which is more dangerous to the nations of the western world, our own among them, than the Red Army of Soviet Russia. Apparently opposing all that may be termed communistic is that other spirit which is vaguely termed Fascism—militant nationalisms of various types—which even although it may retain some sympathy with the religious tradition, if not a vital religious faith, is almost as dangerous to religion as Communism itself. This is so because it deifies a race, or a nation, or a materialistic cause of some sort or other, and seduces the souls of young people with glamorous idolatries. And still another, and the greatest enemy of religion, coming not from Russia, or from any exterior source, is the failure of Christians to live up to their own principles. Surely it is for this reason that the Pope



has called the Christian world to reparation, in this Holy Year commemorating the nineteen hundredth anniversary of the Redemption.”

## Catholic Labor Papers

Although we have called ourselves the only Catholic labor paper, and have been so greeted by friends of labor throughout the country, we wish to call attention to the fact that we are simply the only Catholic paper which proclaims itself for the worker, through its masthead. There are most certainly many other Catholic papers which are exponents of the rights of labor, and are devoting themselves more and more in their columns to conditions of workers in this country. An outstanding example is the Buffalo paper, *The Echo*, which in addition to publishing diocesan news, covers all phases of the labor situation most thoroughly. Someone has been kind enough to send us a subscription to this splendid weekly, and we appreciate it.

## Chapter 16

# Co-operative Apartment for Unemployed Women Has Its Start in Parish

*The Catholic Worker*, Dec 1933, 1, 5.

*Summary: Heralds the opening of a co-operative apartment for ten homeless women and pleads with readers for donations of beds, blankets and sheets. (DDLW #276).*

Although it cannot be dignified by the name of House of Hospitality, what is virtually a center of hospitality is opening today, December 11, in the parish of the Immaculate Conception Church.

It is called the Teresa Joseph Co-operative, and it is an apartment which will house ten homeless women who have been staying at shelters provided by the city, the Salvation Army, and other organizations.

It is named after the older St. Teresa because she was forced to find shelter for her nuns when she was setting up her new foundations. St. Teresa herself said that one of the reasons for the disintegration of the Carmelites was that the convents had become so poor that the nuns, though enclosed, received callers constantly in order that they might get food from outside. One of her first thoughts always was for the material well-being of her nuns as a foundation for spiritual life.

And it was St. Joseph upon whom she always depended to look after her houses. He had had to provide both house and food for the blessed Virgin and Child. And he is the one we, too, must appeal to for aid in this venture for Catholic unemployed.

With the co-operation of the priests of the parish, donations were collected from young working women and married women of the neighborhood to provide for the shelter of their less fortunate sisters. Thirty-five dollars was brought in by Father Stephen Seccor and by Father John Nicholas which they had collected from interested young women who pledged themselves to continue their aid monthly in order that the rent, gas, electricity and laundry of the house might be taken care of. THE CATHOLIC WORKER received fifteen dollars more,

ten dollars from a priest to be used “in any charitable work,” and the other from a sorrowing husband who from the bedside of his dying wife sent this donation as one he knew she would be glad to make for the opening up of a home for single unemployed Catholic women.

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To those who are discouraged at the vastness of the work to be done, and the slightness of the work accomplished, we wish to call attention to the fact that if fifty parishes or schools or organizations would enter on a similar work, five hundred women would be taken care of before the winter is out! And it can all be done with the fifty-cent regularly-made donations of working girls and married women themselves.

It is not really a “house” that we are opening up, but an apartment in this central neighborhood, steam heated and with a good big bath, six large rooms, five of which can be used as bedrooms, one of them a dormitory holding four beds. The rent is fifty dollars a month.

The kitchen is large enough to be used as a small sitting room.

Peter Maurin started the work with his constant propaganda for more hospitality among Catholics. The unemployed single women who came into the office to tell of their need for a Catholic place of shelter provided the immediate cause. And Father Nicholas and Father Seccor with their ready co-operation and courage completed the work which could not have gotten under way without the co-operation of the priests.

So far three beds are all that have been obtained, although ten are needed. We also have four blankets, two of them donated by a woman whose family are unemployed save for one son who is working for ten dollars a week. She washed the blankets herself and sent them down to the office with prayers for the success of the new venture.

Another woman, unable to afford to buy things herself, canvassed among her friends until she found one who voluntarily bought ten sheets, towels and pillow slips.

We have mentioned in another place in this issue how another friend sent in the first contribution in the way of two sheets. Another woman sent drapes, a blanket and sheets, and she is the mother of a large family who could well use them herself.

There is no one no matter how poor who cannot do something for us, so we do not hesitate to ask our New York and Brooklyn readers to call the office if they are able to donate sheets, blankets, towels, pillows, or if they wish to make a donation of money to buy any of those things.

Today we are taking CATHOLIC WORKER money to buy more beds from a rooming house which is being disbanded. We spent some time looking around for some without success, for people don't keep such cumbersome things if they are not in use.

The winter is on us and we can wait no longer and beds we must have. We will borrow blankets for the time being and use those of the editors. They can roll themselves in coats and newspapers, which are said to be warm, though we are sure they are very noisy.

*CHAPTER 16. CO-OPERATIVE APARTMENT FOR UNEMPLOYED WOMEN HAS ITS START IN PA*

However, we hug to ourselves the assurance that “all these things” such as blankets “will be added unto us,” so we are not dismayed. Come to think of it, there are two rugs on THE CATHOLIC WORKER floor, which, if energetically beaten out, will serve as covers.

Christ’s first bed was of straw.

# Chapter 17

## Technique of Agitation

*The Catholic Worker*, December 1933, 2.

*Summary: Distinguishes* The Catholic Worker\* from other news publications: “The purpose of a paper is to influence the thought of its readers. We are quite frankly propagandists for Catholic Action.” (DDLW #198).\*

Father Gratre says that reading newspapers is a waste of time. One loses sight of the eternal. (But we hope you won’t take this to mean that reading THE CATHOLIC WORKER is a waste of time.)

After reading the *New York Times*, the *Daily Worker*, the *Federated Press*, the N.A.A.C.P. news service, the N.C.W.C. news service, *America*, the *Commonweal*, the *Sign*, the *Nation*, *The New Republic*, etc., etc., we bring out a December issue which only glancingly touches on such news as the recent lynchings, codes, sweat shops, housing problems and other news which demands critical comment.

Father Corbett came in to see us a couple of times last month. One day he came in to converse, and another day to criticize, and he left his ear phones off the second day, lest, I suppose, “we justify ourselves in our sins.”

“People say that you do too much criticizing,” he said, “and don’t point out all that is being done.”

We agree that much is being done—but so much more remains. “Never rest, never rest, there’s no peace on earth,” we say cheerfully with our patron saint of Teresa of Avila.

Hence we give much space this issue to detail plans and discuss Houses of Hospitality, our recent Round Table Discussion, ideas for a Catholic Workers’ School.

We are not giving you news such as you get in your daily paper. We are giving you ideas as to Catholic Action. We touch lightly on the hotel worker’s code, because hotel employees have come into the office and told us of the conditions under which they work.

We describe conditions of factory work for girls, because it shows the inefficacy of depending on codes (regulation) as compared to working for a renewal of the Christian spirit. Our date-packing story also shows the need of Houses of Hospitality for women workers at such wages.

The purpose of a paper is to influence the thought of its readers. We are quite frankly propagandists for Catholic Action.

“You may think you are newspaper editors,” Father Parsons, the editor of “America,” said a few months ago in friendly comment. “But agitators is what you really are.”

# Chapter 18

## Catholic Worker Program

*The Catholic Worker*, Dec 1933, 4.

*Summary: Recalls her prayer at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception that God show her a way to use her talents to help labor, Peter Maurin's appearance and inspiration, and the notion of personal responsibility—"Every one can help." Thanks all who have supported the work. (DDLW #277).*

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

A WORKERS' SCHOOL.

HOUSES OF HOSPITALITY.

AGRONOMIC UNIVERSITIES

### Progress

It was just one year ago, December 8, that I spent the morning at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. I had been sent down to Washington to cover the Hunger March of the Communist Unemployed Councils and the Farmers' National Convention, for *America* and *Commonweal*.

There was social justice in the demands made by the Communists—they were the poor, the unemployed, the homeless. They were among the ones Christ was thinking of when he said, "Feed my Sheep." And the Church had food for them, that I knew. And I knew, too, that amongst these men there were fallen-away Catholics who did not know the teachings of their Church on social justice—that there was a need that this message be brought to them. So I offered up my prayers that morning that some way be shown me to do the work that I wanted to do for labor.

When I returned from Washington, I found that Peter Maurin had been to my home to present his program of action. He had read the proposal that we start THE CATHOLIC WORKER. It took some months for the project to get underway, but with his faith and

inspiration, the paper was started, and it has been by the grace of God that it has continued and has grown so that now it reaches over the United States and Canada from coast to coast.

We do not know how we get along. But we know that we are making progress. We keep simple books. What money comes in is listed on one side of the book and what goes out on the other. And we don't often compare them. We only know that the printing bill is getting paid, and so, too, the expenses of running the office and feeding our friends who drop in to see us and remain to help us.

Our files are filling up with letters from workers and scholars, priests and laity all over the country who are commending and collaborating in the work.

And we are not just getting out a paper. We are carrying out as far as we can the program of Catholic Action proposed by Peter Maurin, which calls, first of all, for individual responsibility. Every one can help.

We need, of course, funds to carry on the work. We are not making a drive. We do not set a goal of a few thousand, of forty thousand as the *Daily Worker* does. We proceed on a simpler way. We ask—and trust that we will receive. We ask our friends to continue to support the work which we are doing, and to interest their friends in supporting it.

If you cannot help with money, you can help in building the circulation. Last month in answer to our appeal a widow sent her mite of a quarter, several new subscribers, and two sheets for our first House of Hospitality. We appeal to others to follow her example, to give what help they can give. There is none too poor, and let us hope there is not one too disconsolate about the existing order, to help us with our program.

And for the help we have received, for the ardent support and the prayers which have gone up for us all over the country, we express our heartfelt thanks and gratitude. The hearty cooperation has made the burden of our work lighter, and we are deeply grateful.

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