

Notes By The Way - January 1944

Dorothy Day

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Summary: A series of quotes and biblical citations on love of God and neighbor, and the means of putting on Christ through poverty, solitude, and self-discipline. Says Jesus was not nationalistic, appreciates the doctrine of the Mystical Body and communion of saints. (DDLW #398).

Meditations On Our Times

Pius XII asked us on the feast of the Immaculate Conception to love our enemies; to overcome the spirit of hatred and revenge.

1. Love is the measure by which we shall be judged. **St. John of the Cross.**
2. Hell is not to love any more. **Bernanos.**
3. We can only show our love for God by our love for our fellows. **St. Teresa.**
4. How can we love God whom we do not see, if we do not love our fellow human beings whom we see? **St. John.**
5. Love is a choice, a preference exercised by the will, **diligo**, so we can be commanded to love, to make choice of, to prefer God to all things. **Bede Frost.**
6. The soul that walks in love wearies not, neither is wearied. Love consists not in feeling great things, but in great detachment from things and suffering for the Beloved. **St. John of the Cross.**
7. Love is that of a bride for her husband. Consider the Canticle of Canticles.
8. I love God as much as I love the one I love the least. **Fr. Hugo**, quoting.
9. Love in practice is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams. Dostoevsky.
10. To offer the other cheek, to love your neighbor as yourself, not because it pays to do so, but because it is a joy—to love him with fiery emotion, with passion! (The Journal of an Author, Dostoevsky).

Jesus Was Not Class Conscious

During the Spanish Civil War the communists said, “We will not destroy that statue of Jesus because he is ours.”

When St. John was put in prison by Herod, did our Lord protest? Did He form a defense committee? Did He collect funds, stir up public opinion? Did He try to get him out?

Jesus Was Not Nationalistic

Did He denounce the Vichy men of his day? These were the publicans, who collected taxes for the Romans, such as Matthew and Zacchaeus. First as He came along the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, He healed two blind men and was praised by the multitude. Then He saw Zacchaeus in the sycamore tree and invited Himself to stay at his house; at this the multitude complained of Him. One Sunday he entered Jerusalem as a King. The following Friday he was crucified by the very multitude who acclaimed him. The Church that goes with the state today will be crucified by the state tomorrow. Do we not have to share with the Head, His fate?

Jesus did not try to free the oppressed people of Israel. He did not protest the killing of the Galileans in the Temple by the Roman soldiers. His kingdom was not of this world. He told Peter to put up his sword. He did not bless scrap iron in Churchyards.

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. Remember, too, the publicans can also say, “Thank God I am not as the Pharisees.” (Maureen Egan’s poem in the Torch, Nov., 1943.) Jesus loved publicans and sinners, He loved His enemies. He loved even those who crucified Him. The Liberty of Christ that St. Paul talks so much about was not liberty of the body when Jesus hung on the cross.

The Others

Charles Peguy wrote: “I am afraid to go to Heaven alone. God will say to me, ‘Where are the others?’ ”

In one sense we live and die alone in an awful solitude. But, joyful thought, we are all members one of another, members of the same body and our Head is Jesus Christ. The last encyclical of our dear sweet Christ on earth is on the Mystical Body. (You can get it and read it, as who would not wish to read every word written by Pius XII? America Press in New York puts it out, and so does the N.C.W.C. in Washington.)

Here, too, is the idea of the communion of saints. “When the health of one member suffers, the health of the whole body is lowered.” And contrariwise, if one is uplifted, he lifts others with him. We share in the honor and glory and beauty and love of others. We can draw upon their merits. We are inspired by their example. We are followers of Christ, our Head.

We Put On Christ

St. Paul said, to put off the old man and put on Christ. Poverty is no good supernaturally if it is a pagan poverty for the sake of the freedom involved, though that is good, naturally speaking. Poverty is good, because we share the poverty of others, we know them and so love them more. Also, by embracing poverty we can give away to others. If we eat less, others can have more. If we pay less rent, we can pay the rent of a dispossessed family. If we go with old clothes, we can clothe others. We can perform the corporal works of mercy by embracing poverty.

If we embrace poverty we put on Christ. If we put off the world, if we put the world out of our hearts, there is room for Christ within.

Solitude is no good unless it is “to be still and see that I am God.” God said, “It is not good for man to live alone.” But occasionally Jesus calls and says, “Let us go apart and rest awhile.” By this practice of solitude, one can learn to put the world out, to put on Christ.

One has to practice loving one’s neighbor, seeing Christ in one’s neighbor.

But a Hundredfold

To put off the old man means putting off useless reading, much of our newspaper reading, books, movies. This is mortifying the eyes. Making them dead to the world so we can see the true light which is Christ. (The hundredfold reward.)

(This morning the moon was setting at 6 o’clock—large, radiant, joyful behind the bare black branches of the maples. “I have loved O Lord the beauty of Thy house, the place where thy glory dwelleth.” The star of morn to night succeeds.

The ears. Idle talk. The radio. The world comes into the ears. Suspicion, rancour, hatred, fear, come in through the ears. Perhaps I can learn to control by tongue, practice silence, if I control my ears. This means giving up the good with the bad, music, opera. But, again, we can’t help ourselves, there is that hundredfold. The very birds down here, starlings, sparrows, even the hoarse crow, and in the convent the other morning the so sweet singing to our Lady.)

Touch. The pleasures and pains of sense are confused. In Koestler’s latest book, “Arrival and Departure,” this is very plain. In the book the psychoanalyst told him he was doing penance. The idea is strongly brought out that everyone feels a sense of guilt these days. Ernie Pyle, in the World-Telegram, brought that out the other day. The world has this sense of the Mystical Body. So has the Communist. But how blindly they feel it, poor sheep without a shepherd. The intellectuals shout Fascist every time the Pope speaks. Having eyes they see not, ears, and they hear not.

Christ offered His death for the sins of the world. So we offer our voluntary and involuntary pains and sufferings for the sins of the world, my own and others. Accepting gladly, joyously, by no matter who inflicted. To pray with outstretched arms, to keep vigil when the whole body is tortured with the desire for sleep, to scourge oneself, to fast.

A German woman doctor who spent a year in a concentration camp for refusing to sterilize epileptics, said that one form of torture inflicted was to turn blinding light into the cells so that the women could not sleep. This is to be keeping vigil with Christ. To keep vigil voluntarily is to be sharing this pain of the world, this agony of the Mystical Body. Insomnia may be keeping vigil.

Training to Forgive

To train oneself for the race, to train oneself to a joyful acceptance, a loving acceptance. To love one's enemies.

“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

Jesus said to a fellow-sufferer, who accepted his pains, This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.

St. Peter said, not long after the death of Jesus, “And now brothers, comrades, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. Repent then and be converted.” What hope! What optimism! What foolishness. It is the folly of the cross. Can a Hitler be converted and live? God, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. Let me see Christ in Him. Take away my heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh. Teach me to love.

Help me, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, have mercy on me, a sinner. Help me to make a tiny beginning at building up that great and mighty force of love which will overcome Fear.

How mighty is that force. How terrible and beautiful a thing it is to fall into the hands of a living God. Teach us, God, Holy and Mighty one, what Love is!