

House of Hospitality

Dorothy Day

Chapter Six

Summary: Struggles with discouragement and turns to prayer and spiritual reading for courage. Includes quotes from various spiritual writers. Tales from the farm and trips to the Home Relief Office, swims to escape the oppressive heat, and sweet smells. Rejects the notion that all are not called to perfection and sees true security in giving ones talents in the service of the poor. Details their debt and asserts their insecurity is good. (DDLW #441).

1

GOD has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying: Abba, Father.

“And if it were not for this indwelling of the Holy Spirit we would never have this impulse toward the Father.”—St. Augustine.

These thoughts are here because Teresa was confirmed last month, receiving the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

She also received a new dress, a rare thing in the life of a Catholic Worker.

We now have our Catholic Worker garden commune, and every weekend groups of young workers come down for a holiday, to study or for a retreat.

Honeysuckle is still out and the privet hedges are just beginning to blossom.

There was a thunderstorm and, as usual, after the first burst was over and it had cleared with a golden light over all the damp green, another storm rolled up, or else it was the same storm which had rolled back.

Walking through the wet, tall grass, the trees overhead showered us. The song sparrows and the catbirds sang their last songs before nightfall. In a neighbor's house, Aida was on the radio. It is good to get down to the beach for a quiet breathing spell. In the morning we had, six of us, been up to the 32nd Street courthouse to witness eviction cases.

2

Two of the girls in the House of Hospitality have been fighting constantly. Today I felt so bad about it I could have wept. I am so enraged that anyone should so consistently, month after month, act in mean, little, underhand ways that I almost wanted to beat them both. My mind was in a turmoil and yet I could not stop it. I went to church leaving word for Tina to meet me there and she came and stayed until after the rosary. (She must be getting to feel quite at home in church.) Afterwards, we went to the movies and saw a really delightfully funny film with Butterworth in it, and then we went home, both of us with raging headaches. It had been very hot all day. At the house, it was still noisy and I wept before going to sleep, and awoke with the same feeling of oppression. To Mass and Communion, still feeling oppressed, praying with distraction. And yet it rather amused me too to place the two girls together in the hands of our Blessed Mother. But it worked!

Despite my feeling of almost hopelessness and desperation, humanly speaking, I came through the day feeling singularly calm, peaceful and happy.

Three conclusions were the result of my praying: First: My getting into a temper helped nobody. But remaining loving towards all helped to calm them all. Hence a great responsibility rests on me, Second: It was cruel to be harsh to anyone so absolutely dependent, as they are, humanly, on my kindness. Third: It is a healthy sign that they are not crushed and humbled towards other human beings by their own miseries. I mean, going around meekly for fear of me, or being humble out of human respect.

one must only be humble from a divine motive, otherwise humility is a debasing and repulsive attitude. To be humble and meek for love of God—that is beautiful. But to be humble and meek because your bread and butter depends on it is awful. It is to lose one's sense of human dignity. So it is a cause for gratitude that Mr. C. and Mr. N. (it is not only women who are troublesome) and the girls should feel free to assert themselves, not worrying about the trouble they cause.

Let reform come through love of God only, and from that love of God, love of each other.

The epistle or gospel, I forget which, for St. Paulinus' day is especially beautiful: "Out of your abundance supply their want."

Which means charity and patience and love, as well as material goods, and abilities to help actively in the movement. It has been doing me good all week.

This morning it was the Offertory of the Sacred Heart Mass which caught my eye. Why should we expect consolations?

It is good and healthy to be oppressed, a great opportunity for growth. We are driven to prayer, we are loath and comfortless. But as Dom Chapman says, "It is the after effects which count."

And the after effects of last night's and this morning's heavy praying have been peace and joy and strength and thanksgiving and a great deal of humility too, at being so weak that God had to send me consolation to prepare me for the next trial.

I should know by this time that just because I *feel* that everything is useless and going to pieces and badly done and futile, it is not really that way at all. Everything is all right. It is in the hands of God. Let us abandon everything to Divine Providence.

And I must remember too that often beautiful scenery or a perfect symphony leaves me cold and dreary. There is nothing the matter either with the scenery or the music—it is myself. I have endured other miseries cheerfully at times. So I must be calm, patient, enduring, and meditate on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

I am writing this for my consolation and courage some future day when God sees fit and thinks me strong enough to bear longer-continued crosses.

It is to remind myself so that maybe I will be stronger.

3

The Epistle for St. James' Day:

"We are made a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake."

St. James is called a "Son of Thunder" for his fiery zeal.

Distribution of literature to truckmen and longshoremen.... Wrote leaflet opposing United Front on the German situation because of divergent philosophies. Washed sheets for Mr. Breen The filing which we are going in for intensively Letters.... Reading.... Helen Crowe over and we went to see a newsreel and saw a volcano picture.... Talked of O'Leary's trial and of spies Mary and Big Dan, Joe and Elizabeth out selling Great controversy and opposition over works of mercy. No use writing about it. We talk for hours.

Yesterday one of the Educational Division of Federal Workers, called about workers' groups. He wanted discussions and workers, and suggested that we recommend teachers. They want variety. It seems all they have is "modified" Marxist teaching. Strange anomaly.

4

Lord Macaulay calls Lucian of Samosata the last great master of Attic wit and eloquence. This is from The Death of Peregrine:

"It was now that he came across the priests and scribes of the Christians, in Palestine, and picked up their queer creed. . . . The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day, the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account."

The story goes on about the rogue Peregrine taking in the Christians so that when he went to jail for some "imposture" the Christians took it all very seriously; he was no sooner in prison than they began trying every means to get him out again, but without success. Everything else that could be done for him they most devoutly did. They thought of nothing else. Orphans and ancient widows might be seen hanging about the prison from break of day. Their officials bribed the gaolers to let them sleep inside with him. Elegant dinners were conveyed in; their sacred writings were read. . . . In some of the Asiatic cities, too, the Christian communities put themselves to the expense of sending deputations, with offers of sympathy, assistance and legal advice. The activity of these people in dealing with any matter that affects their community, is something extraordinary; they spare no trouble, no expense. . . .

You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted and deny the Gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on trust, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property.

Here is another good quotation:

"All property, the more common it becomes, the more heavenly it becomes."—St. Gertrude.

"A Saint is one who has learned to spiritualize and sacramentalize and ennoble everything in the world and make of it a prayer."—Fulton Sheen.

How much time is consciously spent in prayer? Three-quarters of an hour in the morning at Mass. Rosary and visit, one half hour. Night prayers, one half hour. Say, two hours all told. Spiritual reading one two hours. Sleep seven hours, which leaves thirteen of activity. Too much.

I shall add up each day and keep track.

Immediately after writing this—more activity. It was the beginning of the Campion weekend so that there were the children to be dressed and brought into town, and Teresa to be sent back to school for a midsummer retreat. Then at eleven that night up to where the *Bremen* was docked to be at the demonstration held there by the Communists. We distributed the leaflet of the Friends of Catholic Germany. There was a riot on the boat, the flag was torn down, and there was some disturbance on the pier. Eight men were arrested and the demonstration proceeded up to the night court, then to the police station on 47th Street. There occurred a most vicious attack by the police on the demonstrators who were engaged in holding a meeting outside the court and singing songs. Men and women were dubbed, driven down the street and beaten. I saw two plainclothesmen beating up one of the demonstrators in a hallway. The crowd was dispersed, but at what cost of sacrifice of principle!

"To love is not to experience a particular sensation in the heart; that emotion is but a reflex phenomenon, a detail of love and the least. To love is to wish for the good, it is to give the best of one's self for the good of another; it does not mean grasping for one's self; love means giving one's self.

"As long as the understanding finds no trouble or difficulty, and is at ease, that is a sign that one's faith has not gone far enough."—Msgr. Landrieux, in *The Forgotten Paraclete*.

"Every creature is a word of that divine poem, a sacred hieroglyphic, a kind of sacrament, a visible sign that contains a fragment of the idea of God."

"When we enter upon the duties of any office, as that of regent, preacher, or superior, we ought to prepare ourselves for it by some practice of humility, mortification, or charity, such as visiting prisoners or the poor in hospitals, serving in the kitchen, etc. . . .

"We must hope and expect great things from God, because the merits of Our Lord belong to us; and to hope much in God is to honor Him much. The more we hope, the more we honor Him."—Father Lallemand.

Question: "Do you regard the Hebrew prophets and Jesus as historical figures, and if so, have they social significance?"

Answer: "They are historical figures at least in the sense that they have played quite a role in the historical development of the human mind. Whether they were the product of the human mind or whether they had some more direct material basis is not important to us. We do not enter the field of higher criticism." Earl Browder in *Religion and Communism*.

(Note: Those who asked the questions in this pamphlet came from the Union Theological Seminary. They were not representative of the religious mind. They did not uphold the supernatural, and stated that they did not believe in everlasting life.)

Finished *The Forgotten Paraclete* by Landrieux. Now reading Father Louis Lallemand's *Spiritual Teaching*, recommended by Father McSorley; *The Idiot*, Dostoevsky; Sophocles' Plays; *Labor and Steel*, *Labor and Textiles*, *Personal History*—Vincent Sheean's account of Rayna.

5

Out on the garden commune, Edelson works in his bare feet, his trousers rolled up to his knees, his shirt off, his undershirt clinging to his back.

He works with a pick, wielding it with large, strong swings. Every now and then he pauses and crumbles the dirt beneath his feet, meditating. He will give us some weeks, he said, for the sake of comradeship, Christian Communism, co-operation, brotherhood, unity, as a member of the Mystical Body, because

Christ was in his heart, in the spirit of the priesthood of the laity, and for a good many other reasons. Also because it would do him good.

Catherine Smith wanders around in a pair of baggy old trousers, muddy at the knees, and today she is carting stones and making a rock garden.

Hergenhan has been working at the vegetable garden for three weeks, bringing hundreds of boxes of topsoil from the woods to enrich the carefully prepared beds. Tomato and cabbage plants are set out, the squash and cucumbers in their neat round hills; radishes, beets, onions and lettuce—all are coming up.

Hergenhan is a German and works with order and precision.

In town, at Charles Street, there is no backyard, there are no green things to refresh the eye. I miss our petunia garden, the asparagus plants, the fig tree and privet hedges. It is true that across the street there is an ailanthus tree, "tree of heaven" it is called, and it arouses hunger and thirst in me for the country.

There is no other speck of green. For trees we have the masts and funnels of ships along the docks, and for grass and earth we have the uneven cobbles of sidewalks in front of warehouses and trucking stations, with bleak and ugly tenements in between.

6

Last winter Margaret became ill with arthritis and had to go to the hospital where she spent two or three months. We could not take care of the baby ourselves so it is now boarded out with another little girl of Margaret's. Now that Margaret is better she has come down to the country for a rest in the sun. She has taken to writing in order to express her happiness at being up and around once more. She writes at least a page a day, and the following is an excerpt from a month's writing:

"I dressed quickly, had my breakfast and went to the beach. I saw fish swimming as the tide was going out. I ran in with my clothes and caught one and then six more. I could not see any more. I went to the house and I looked at the calendar and it said it was a fast day, so we all had fish.

"The next day I put on a bathing suit and caught eight more fish. We all ate it and it tasted very good only it had too many bones. Bill and Rufus are digging, cutting grass and planting some kind of a climbing vine. Edelson was chopping trees and helping Hergenhan with a grape arbor. In the evening we played the piano, everyone was singing and happy.

"Tonight is Monday night. Hergenhan is watering the garden. He was half finished and it started in to rain. God saw that the garden was in need of a good watering, so he helped Hergenhan with our Catholic Workers' vegetable garden.

"All of us sat on the front porch. Teresa and I love to watch the rain fall. Then Rufus said let's put on our bathing suits and go for a walk. It was fun, rain

pouring down on our heads and faces. Flashes of lightning showed us the way to the beach.

“Teresa, Bill and Rufus ran up and down on the sand trying to catch the lightning. None of us were afraid. We walked up the country road stumping our toes, Rufus stepped on a frog,—poor frog—and said, let us take it up to the house and put it in Edelson’s bed. He will meditate on him. Rufus let the little frog go. We came in soaking wet. It sure was fun walking in the rain, thunder and lightning. If you have God in your heart He will protect you from all danger.”

7

A day so wet and heavy that one can scarcely breathe. No sun, but the air felt hot as a blanket, hanging close over the city, and people walked around languidly, scarcely able to move with the oppression that was on them.

Down to the Houston Street Home Relief Bureau with some friends who are on Home Relief and who are registering for work relief, and there marveled at the two policemen and five husky young men hanging around the entrance. jobholders they are, sneering at those who come for help. “A strong-arm squad,” a member of the Workers’ Alliance told us, “to keep delegations out of the Bureau. We were down last week, presenting a petition, and I got a black eye as a result. We come to ask for jobs and all we get is kicks and curses.”

A woman with a baby in her arms, probably not more than a few weeks old, came to ask why her rent had not been paid. She was refused admittance and told to leave her baby at home next time, with her husband, perhaps.

She did not speak English very well, but she made the strong-arm squad understand that “she had no husband.”

“And where did the baby come from?” they jeered as she was forced to leave.

8

Down to Staten Island in the afternoon to see how the family there were getting along. Bernard and Rudy, two little Negro boys, six and eight, from the Harlem classes, and a former Jewish rabbi, homeless because of his conversion, are our latest guests there.

There was time for a swim before supper and the water was oily calm, with the sky hanging so low over it that you could almost reach up and touch it with your hands. We all crouched in the water, digging for small hardshell clams with our hands, and found a dozen. Teresa was best at it.

After supper the atmosphere was a little brighter, with the rays of the sun stealing out from under the heavy curtain of clouds and just a suggestion of freshness in the air. So the children and Stanley and I went for a walk, arriving

back in the dusk, the children stumbling not only with fatigue but because they insisted on walking with their faces uplifted to the moon.

Another morning, hot and heavy, and with the first rays of the sun the cicadas began their triumphant song. Teresa. woke me to tell me they were the first of the year and it was pleasant to lie there in bed and listen to the loud crescendo rising to a climax and dying out again drowsily.

The children played out under the apple trees after breakfast, waiting for the grownups to be ready for a swim while the tide was high.

Mid-week as it was, the beach was deserted and it was refreshing to swim out into the calm bay and then float, bathed in sea, sky and sun, and silence too, save for the happy calls of the children as they played with the little waves that foamed up on the beach.

The garden progresses, and for the last few days, with the heavy rains, there had been no need to water it. We are beginning to study sprays and the labels which proclaim their efficacy for aphids, thrips and leaf hoppers, Mexican bean beetles, black fly, soft scale and midge. We have been eating lettuce, onions, radishes and a few string beans and soon the tomatoes will be ready. One of the best smells in the world is the smell of tomato plants, or perhaps the wet earth after a rain, or honeysuckle, or privet hedge in blossom. The world is full of good smells down here after the heavy smells of the city and crowded humans. Even the poison ivy we have discovered has a delicious odor when it is blossoming. So there is one good contribution from that venomous weed which has caused two of our workers to swell and bum and itch****through sleepless nights.

The only trouble with the garden commune is that one cannot be there all the time. There are a dozen permanent residents and all the rest go and come to fulfill their duties in town as well as out. And it is always such a wrench to put on shoes and stockings and toil the hot long mile to the station and take the train into the city.

Bernard has just come in with another bouquet for his mother. The two children pick daily bouquets which are gathered with loving care and then forgotten: wild carrot, wild onion, bay leaves, sassafras twigs, buttercups and daisies, Queen Anne's lace, clovers and the persisting honeysuckle.

From the open window by my side as I write, the smell of new cut grass is coming in from the field by the side of the house where Stanley is cutting. He has left the city streets and his apostolate of paper selling, has Stanley, and has become the guardian of the two small colored boys for a week.

Today five little colored girls came down: Dorothy and Hattie, Louise, Bernice and Elinor. They, too, are Harlem children, and they don't need anyone to watch them, they said, because Dorothy is twelve and quite used to being guardian to three or four younger than herself.

The work in town calls, and one must go back and face****evictions, court cases,

hospital patients to visit, callers to see at the office and folders of letters which must be answered.

9

Christ told Peter to put aside his nets and follow Him. He told the rich young man to sell what he had and give to the poor and follow Him. He said that those who lost their lives for His sake should find them. He told people to take no thought for the morrow. He told His followers that if anyone begged for their coats to give up their cloaks too. He spoke of feeding the poor, sheltering the homeless, of visiting those in prison and the sick and also of instructing the ignorant. He said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me." He said: "Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

But the usual comment is: "You must distinguish between counsel and precept. You forget that He said also: 'All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given.' 'He that can take it, let him take it.'"

Paul Claudel said that young people have a hunger for the heroic, and too long they have been told, "Be moderate, be prudent."

Too long have we had moderation and prudence. Today is a time of crisis and struggle. Within our generation, Russia has rejected Christianity, Germany has rejected it, Mexico fights to exterminate it, in Spain there has been a war against religion, in Italy Fascism has exalted the idea of the state and, rejecting the Kingship of Christ, has now a perverted idea of authority.

In this present situation when people are starving to death because there is an overabundance of food, when religion is being warred upon throughout the world, our Catholic young people still come from schools and colleges and talk about looking for security, a weekly wage.

They ignore the counsels of the Gospels as though they had never heard of them, and those who are troubled in conscience regarding them speak of them as being impractical.

Why they think a weekly wage is going to give them security is a mystery. Do they have security on any job nowadays? If they try to save, the bank fails; if they invest their money, the bottom of the market drops out. If they trust to worldly practicality, in other words, they are out of luck.

If they sell their labor (see Peter Maurin's essays) they are prostituting the talents God gave them. College girls who work at Macy's—is this what their expensive training was for? boys who go into business looking for profits—is this what their Catholic principles taught them?—are hovering on the brink of a precipice. They have no security and they know it. The only security comes in the following of the precepts and counsels of the Gospels.

If each unemployed nurse went to her pastor and got a list of the sick and gave up the idea of working for wages and gave her services to the poor of the parish, is there not security in the trust that God will provide?

This is but one instance of using the talents and abilities that God has given to each one of us.

What right has anyone of us to have security when God's poor are suffering? What right have I to sleep in a comfortable bed when so many are sleeping in the shadows of buildings here in this neighborhood of *The Catholic Worker* office? What right have we to food when many are hungry, or to liberty when the Scottsboro boys and so many labor organizers are in jail?

St. Thomas says: "The counsels of perfection are, considered in themselves, expedient for everybody," and he adds charitably, "but owing to the varying dispositions of people there are some for whom they are not expedient because their inclinations do not tend in that direction."

But to those in whose minds these questions are stirring, there are those words directed:

"Today if you shall hear My voice, harden not your hearts.

"This is the true fraternity, which overcame the crimes of the world; it followed Christ, attaining the noble kingdom of Heaven."—From the Gradual for July 9th.

10

There were six of us at Mass this morning and the morning was cool, with a haze coming up from the river. Around on Washington Street, under the New York Central tracks, there is grass growing and there are crickets in that grass. A window box on the fire escape of a tenement is lush with balsam and petunia.

The sun sparkles on the river and the boats plough joyously through the choppy water. These are the things that make thanksgiving easy to continue during the day.

Every good impulse, every noble deed we perform is of God, Christ in us. At the very same time there is an evil, complacent nagging going on, trying to discourage us, trying to impugn our motives, trying to spoil everything of good we do. This complacency, self-satisfaction, is to be scorned and silenced. It shows pride even to be surprised and grieved at the baseness, like sediment, at the bottom of every good deed. As long as we live there will be a war, a conflict between nature and grace, nature again and again getting the upper hand for the moment, only to be put down rigidly. If we have faith and hope, it is impossible to be discouraged.

"You never enjoy the world aright till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars; and perceive yourself

to be sole heir of the whole world and more so because men are in it who are everyone sole heirs as well as you. Till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as misers do in gold, and kings in scepters you never can enjoy the world.”—From *The Meditation of Traherne*.

“Many will never arrive at a high perfection, because they do not hope sufficiently. We must have a strong and solid hope, grounded on the mercy and infinite goodness of God, and on the infinite merits of Jesus Christ.”—Lallemant.

“Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope.” —Ps. IV, 10.

“Grace is sometimes compared to a fountain of living water, and again to a glowing fire Divine grace, like water, purifies, refreshes, vivifies What the soul does for the body, grace does for the soul.” From *The Forgotten Paraclete* by Msgr. J. R. Maurice Landrieux.

“To him that thirsteth, I will give of the water of life freely.”

Voluntary poverty—penance: “No efforts or expenses seem too great to purchase our escape from the afflictions which God sends us; and yet they are even more beneficial and more meritorious than voluntary penances. For God knows better than we in what regards and by what means our soul has need of being purified and regenerated. Besides, labours and penances which are taken on voluntarily and by choice leave still open, good as they are, a free field for self-love. But those which come upon us unexpectedly and undesired, even if we endure them with patience or with joy, seem always impositions, not the growth of our own will and desire; and therefore they exclude pride, self-love and vanity.”—St. Angela of Foligna.

Prayer: “If recollection seems difficult, at least accustom yourself to pronounce with your lips words which relate to the Passion; the habit of the lips easily becomes a habit of the heart, and within the cold heart the fire will gradually become warmer.”—St. Angela of Foligna.

“O Lord, take away my heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh.”

“O God, I believe. Help Thou my unbelief.”

“Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.” . . . “To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life.”

I went back into town last Monday to find L. on hunger strike because of D.’s and J.’s tormenting. They were the workers and he was the scholar and he was not earning his salt, according to them. He nagged back, and between them life was miserable. I induced J. to take a vow of holy silence for a while, and persuaded L. not to be childish and to reconcile himself to criticism.

Transition periods are always trying. The struggle to make the scholars work and the workers study, I was thinking as I washed dishes and dish towels, and C. and D. sat upstairs reading and doing nice clean clerical work. The boys, D. and E., were cleaning beds, moving furniture, etc., and it was hard to get others to help.

The workers try to become white-collar workers and abandon working with their hands, and the scholars spend their time in work and have no time to study except by grabbing it. So much time must be given to the physical details of life,—cleaning beds, kitchens, garbage cans, toilets. It is endless, and it seems to take such a large proportion of time. The majority of people have no machines—dishwashers, cleaners, tractors. Most of the physical work of our existence still has to be done with the hands.

12

A breathing spell in the country: A. is fixing up the tomato vines. The boys are out picking huckleberries and are going to make pie. It is very hot again and there is a sleepy sound of crickets. In spite of the eight children, the house is quiet—peaceful after the furore of town. This morning I spent hours trying to trace B., calling police, hospitals, his friends. Too many of these latter said, “He is not my responsibility. What can I do?” We have few friends in this world.

I went to the Foundling to visit Barbara. Human distress and misery everywhere.

A social worker from Canada says that here Catholic charity is too bound up with the state, and legislation is for the individual rather than for the family, which is the true unit of society. She said too that the State Welfare Department was going to look into the matter of so many children so easily committed and so little effort to keep the family together.

They are doing it because of the expense involved, not the principle.

We had a letter this morning from the man who gave us the use of the store in Harlem. He is not in accord with our principles in regard to war, so he will not help *The Catholic Worker* any longer. Also, will we please move at once? The eighteen who frequent the center will be heartbroken.

Rumors go the rounds. Rumors that we are Communists, that I am, but not the rest, that I am arrested, or about to be. The Civil Liberties Union called up yesterday to ask if they could defend me.

A campaign against our little brothers, the bedbugs. Sulphur candles, black flag, kerosene. Some overstuffed furniture had to be discarded. Such warm, comfortable furniture too. The little boys on the street had it torn to pieces in no time and the streets well littered. The cleaning department objects. We miss our disorderly East side where the kids make bonfires of the trash as it is set out. Our West side street cleaners say we can have bonfires in winter, but not in summer.

Last night the Liturgical group of Champions sang Vespers and Compline. They sang and sang and could not stop. The truckmen in the garage at the back of the house, the police in the station house across the street, were overwhelmed with plain chant.

Tina, our Trotskyite friend, came in to say that “yodeling is an indispensable part of every movement.” Out in the Middle West and in the South the strikers sang hymns as they picketed their factories. Even while they were being clubbed, the Communists last month up in front of the 47th Street station house sang Communist songs.

It is good to see Gregorian a part of the Catholic Worker movement.

13

Rain all day long and everything damp. The woodwork in the house is sweating. Mass at eight. Drunken Michael McCarthy to breakfast with two black eyes. Read aloud to him St. Teresa’s vision of hell. B., very well since his re-appearance, not so well today. Perhaps it’s the weather. Margaret is better. Children came in for games and cocoa. We are picketing St. Joseph: Stanley, Francis, me, Dan, Bill, Jim, Charlie, Mr. Hunton, Ann, so far have spent four hours.

Reading St. Teresa’s *Foundations* last night gave me much courage to proceed. If our surroundings are cold, desolate and dirty with the dirt of poverty which is so hard to combat, it is the more suited to us. Our debts are now one thousand five hundred and thirty dollars. We are most completely dependent on God.

I am glad it is September and the summer is drawing to a close. I think March and August hard months to get through, winter and summer doldrums. We have never been so badly off as now. And I am beginning to feel better and better, praise God.

We can smell September, and Margaret is beginning to count the blankets. Jim is down at the fish market where there is a good Catholic whose abundance supplies our want. Bill had been to the vegetable market where he got potatoes. There will be chowder tonight. There is no money in the house, but there will be dinner, that is if the gas company does not shut off the gas for non-payment for the past two months. Too bad there isn’t an onion to put in the stew.

Jim has come in with the fish in a black market bag. The friend was not there, but he got twenty pounds for fifty cents, and the man trusted him for the fifty cents. As he walks around the office displaying his catch, our black cat, Social Justice, follows him around interestedly. She has five little kittens downstairs and she is as interested as we are in the matter of meals. The kittens are satin, blue plush and brindle, Teresa says, and she wishes there were some calico ones, which means the yellow-tawny kind.

Francis comes up with the charge book for the cooperative store, and says we need bread and soap powder and scouring powder. But we remind him we ought not to charge any more with the bill already up to almost a hundred dollars. It’s a job to be clean and poor at the same time. As for bread, someone will bring in some money from selling papers to buy bread.

Out in the country they are doing very well with the garden and a Catholic grocer who trusts us and trusts God. The bill out there is seventy-five dollars too, but we've put it under the statue of St. Joseph. There are plenty of tomatoes, cabbages, cucumbers and string beans, and we've even had sweet corn at half a dozen meals. There are clams in the bay, and we are on meat strike. And as for keeping clean—the difficulty there is getting into the bath tub, which is always full of baby eels and killies, the children's pets. One can bathe in the bay, after all.

This started out to be a financial account but the fresh breeze coming in from the North River and the smell of fish arising from the kitchen reminds one of the country.

We were looking over our last accounting which we sent out to our friends last September and we noted that not only has our circulation doubled, but the number of people being fed has quintupled. This means that the printing bill is \$450 a month, and that the food bill for the Charles Street place and the country place combined is about fifty a week, or \$200 a month. That includes fifteen quarts of milk a day, and it isn't we hale and hearty ones who drink it, but the children and invalids, of which latter there are always about four.

And lest this large grocery bill, which our readers pay after all, staggers them, let us count ourselves up.

Down in the country there are ten children right now, aged six to fourteen, and their appetites increase and multiply with the days at the seashore. (During the summer we took care of fifty children altogether.) Then there are seven adults, which makes seventeen people sitting down to a meal three times a day, or fifty-one meals served a day—3,060 for the months of July and August. (But there are more than that, often fifty people over the weekends.) Of course, the midday meal is not rightly a meal, but just sandwiches, peanut butter or tomato, and either cocoa or milk, and you should see the bread and butter fly.

As for the Charles Street quarters, there are sixteen people living there and they've been on a long fast during the summer. Those who come back from the country tell of delicious lemon meringue pies, not to speak of ordinary food, and city workers lick their chops (especially Big Dan, whose large bulk is hard to satisfy on oatmeal in the morning, sandwiches, and not too many of them, at noon, and vegetable stew in the evening).

In addition to the sixteen living in the house, there are the two married couples living in little apartments and eating at home, whose rents and grocery bills, gas and electric, must also be paid. Also there are half a dozen coming in to eat at the office who do not live here. Rents total \$150, whereas last year they were \$62, and the combined gas and electricity amount to \$25; laundry, \$15; telephones, \$ 18; mailing and express, \$75. And as this month's paper comes out there is another printing bill of \$450, and the rent goes on and so do the groceries. Disregarding the latter two items, we are faced with our large bills (there are other little ones) of \$1,403 and nothing in the bank to pay them.

This, then, is the holy poverty we are always talking about. This is the insecurity which we do most firmly believe it is good for us to have.