

Our First Editorial – May, 1933

Dorothy Day

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Summary: In the inaugural issue of the paper, she states the purpose of The Catholic Worker: to popularize the Catholic Church's program for constructing the social order. Challenges atheistic radicalism asking, "Is it not possible to be radical without being atheistic?" Notes their poverty and asks for contributions. (DDLW #913).

For those who are sitting on 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, THE CATHOLIC WORKER is being edited. It is printed to call their attention to the fact that the Catholic Church has a social program.

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 without being atheistic?

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 and the program offered by the Church for the constructing of a social order, this news sheet was started.

This first number of THE CATHOLIC WORKER was planned, written and edited in the kitchen of a tenement of Fifteenth Street, on subway platforms, on the "L," on ferry boats. There is at present 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 priest in Newark sent us a dollar. Another generous friend sent in twenty-five dollars. The rest of the money needed the editors squeezed out of their own earnings, and at that they were using money necessary to pay milk bills, gas bills, rent and electric 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 co-operators.

We are asking our friends and sympathizers to help out towards the next issue by sending contributions and subscriptions and orders for bundles. The price of the paper is one cent a copy, in order to place it within the reach of all. And for the unemployed it is distributed free to those who wish to read it. 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 cornfields picking the ears from the stalks to make their frugal meals.

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