

Day After Day - November 1941

Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, November 1941, 1, 4.

Summary: Renews opposition to peacetime conscription and urges readers to write the government, talk about it at meetings, and pray and do penance—"This program is open to us all." Enrolls her daughter in a "domestic science" school in Montreal. Includes a canticle of thanksgiving about little beauties in the city. (DDLW #376).

October 16 is the first anniversary of peacetime conscription and you will notice the several letters on the page devoted to the Association of Catholic Conscientious Objectors telling of the way different C.O. camps celebrated it. We continue to protest our country's supine acceptance of peacetime compulsory military training and urge our readers to protest, and to urge the repeal of this law. We are set in opposition to the policies of the administration (and it will be remembered that Lincoln said that one could oppose the administration without being opposed to our form of government) and we must continue to voice our opposition to the undeclared war we are waging and the imminence of the declared war the President warns us of in his Armistice Day speech.

We are crushed under the burden of our guilt in starving our brothers in Europe. There are 300,000,000 people on rations in Europe. God only knows what will be the outcome of hunger there this winter. When will the pestilence strike that goes with famine?

Do What You Can

You can write and write again, protesting our President's policy of accepting the British blockade. Talk to others about it. Take up this matter at trade union meetings, solidarity meetings, club meetings. Write to 420 Lexington Ave., National Committee on Food for Europe, and find out what you can do to help. Work and pray, or rather pray that God will show you what to do these dreadful days. These are days when people are flocking to the churches, to the Communion rail. This midweek morning there were several rails of communicants and it is so every morning at the six, seven and eight o'clock Masses.

To pray, to work for peace in whatever way you can, to sacrifice and do penance for our sins as a nation, this program is open to us all.

We may not see results, we may in no way stem the tide right now.

“Our daily bread,” Zundel writes, in *The Splendor of the Liturgy* “tastes more bitter. The soul must become acquainted, by living them in her measure, with all the states of the Only Son. For God cannot identify us with His Christ unless He conforms us to His Passion.”

Travelogue

This month I spoke in Providence, Rhode Island; in Brockton and Cambridge, Mass.; Stoddard, New Hampshire; Forest Hills, Long Island; Pittsfield, Mass.; Chicago, Ill.; and Boston, Mass., and then back to New York to speak again.

In addition to the speaking before various groups, Teresa and I made a quick trip to Montreal so that she could be entered at St. Martine’s in a little school recommended by Monsignor Ligutti, where the Sisters of the Holy Name teach spinning, weaving, dyeing, sewing and knitting, in addition to cooking, and other household arts. They speak only French, and during her free hours Teresa will read history. She has a busy winter before her, but next year, when she is sixteen, she can settle on the farm, and help Eva with the household and garden work, and teach the others how to spin and weave on the loom in Grace Branham’s house.

No matter what is going on in the world, women know that meals must be cooked, and men know that fields must be planted and harvested.

It was hard leaving Teresa in Canada. Montreal seemed a gloomy place on a dull, grey day, with all the young men in uniform. One felt indeed in a country at war. The school is an hour out, by a bus which runs twice a day. I kept comforting myself that she was not so very far away. After all, the round trip to New York is only fifteen dollars by bus and it is an overnight trip. The tuition at the school is eighteen dollars a month. There are about twenty of these domestic science schools in Quebec to revive the household arts that the French were in danger of losing.

And in spite of war and the griefs of parting, there was time and impulse for a poem or a canticle, whatever one chooses to call it. I wrote it on the subway, and it is for Teresa:

Thank God for turtles in backyards,
For smell of horses and the wagon load of celery,
For scrubbed sweet potatoes
Baking in a push cart oven,
For the smell of charcoal on a dull fall day.
For chestnuts, too, and the dry leaves of Bayard St.
For the little bird in the church yard,
Bright with the yellow breast.
For the pert grasshopper on Katie’s vegetable stand,
For babies, for kittens, for little humble things.
Teresa calls dungeons, the dark dark tenements,
But thank God for poverty which drives us from ugliness
To walk in parks, over bridges, or just among the people.

The sky is ours, the wind, the rain.
There is sun on bare branches, and sun on the housetops.
We cannot be home bound, we must look for God's things,
So to the streets, to the parks, to the bridge, to the rivers, to the markets, to the bay,
Everywhere, even here,
Even in the dungeons
In the ugly cities,
There we thank Thee,
Loved One, God!