

Reflections During Advent

Dorothy Day

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*Summary: During the Advent of 1966 Dorothy Day wrote a four-part series for *Ave Maria* magazine grouped under the title “Reflections During Advent.” (DDLW #558).*

Week One: Searching for Christ

Commenting on the riches and turbulence in an era of renewal of the Church, she decides to write about Mary in her life. Traces her early religious experiences, tells what led her to God, and recounts the gift of a rosary and a statue of Mary. Appreciates the physical and sensual aspects of prayer and relates the mysteries of the rosary to life experiences. Tells of other Marian prayers said at the Catholic Worker and Mary’s role in bringing us to Christ.

Week Two: The Meaning of Poverty

Gives examples of false voluntary poverty and refutes the notion that real poverty doesn’t exist. Challenges everyone to a personal response, not a government one, to poverty and to ask ourselves “What shall we do?” Gives examples and concludes that all can do something and that whatever work of mercy we perform we “do it for love of Jesus, in His humanity, for love of our brother, for love of our enemy.” Points to the scandal of the wealth of the Church and thanks God for the sacraments and the Word in the Scriptures—our light and our food.

Week Three: Chastity

Paints a picture of chastity as “a positive virtue, a strength and a power in the great world around us” through personal stories, and quotes from literature, scripture, and spiritual writers. The marriage act is compared to love and union with God. Speaks of chosen and unchosen celibacy. Extols friendship, community, and the need to express tenderness. Other keywords: sex, abortion, purity, new morality

Week Four: Obedience

Ponders the relationship between freedom and authority, faith and obedience. Uses her conversion and starting of the Catholic Worker as examples of conscience and the great freedom of the laity. Cites various authorities and the example of Pope John XXIII on freedom and obedience. Ultimately, links obedience to love and her faith. Repeats the need to “search the Scriptures” and to achieve a “second conversion” to the faith.

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