

Wealth, The Humanity of Christ, Class War

Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, June 1935, 4.

Summary: Working to improve the material conditions of workers is grounded in Christ's humanity and the reality of the Mystical Body. Relying on violence betrays both workers and the brotherhood of man. (DDLW #290).

WEALTH

"The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits. And he thought within himself, saying: "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?"

And he said, "This will I do, I will pull down my barns and will build greater and into them will I gather all the things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest; eat, drink, make good cheer!"

But God said to him: "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God.

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

It is because we forget the Humanity****of Christ (present with us****today in the Blessed Sacrament just as truly as when He walked with His apostles through the cornfields that Sunday long ago, breakfasting on the ears of corn) – that we have ignored the material claims of our fellow man during this capitalistic, industrialist era. We have allowed our brothers and sisters, our fellow members in the Mystical Body to be degraded, to endure slavery to a machine, to live in rat-infested holes.

This ignoring of the material body of our humanity which Christ ennobled when He took flesh,gives rise to the aversion for****religion evidenced by many workers. As a result of this worshipping of the Divinity alone of Christ and ignoring His Sacred Humanity, religious people looked to Heaven for justice and Karl Marx could say –

“Religion is the opium of the people.”

And Wobblies could say – “Work and Pray–live on hay; you’ll get pie in the sky when you die.”

It is because we love Christ in His Humanity that we can love our brothers. It is because we see Christ in the least of God’s creatures, that we can talk to them****of the love of God and

know that what we write will reach their hearts.

A. Yenukidze in the “Life of Stalin” wrote: "It is a well

known fact that the most difficult task for intellectuals among the workers has always been to find ****a tongue in which to speak to the workers'."

And St. Paul said, “If you speak with the tongue of men and angels and have not charity you are become a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.”

CLASS WAR

To assent to violence is to give way to the spirit of the times This is truly betraying the workers,

Agreeing with the necessity for force is making concessions to the immediate, the expedient. It is in reality denying the doctrine of the brotherhood of man and the dogma of the Mystical Body. “Why must the members war one against the other?”

To become one with the workers – to be the poorest of the poor, yes.

But to assent to the mob spirit is a betrayal. It is to be carried on the wave of a movement. It is the easiest way. To use all of our spiritual forces to propel that movement of the people is to be guilty of a terrible wrong.