

Thanksgiving

Dorothy Day

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Summary: Expresses gratitude for many contributions as the circulation of the paper has grown to 20,000. There is a melancholy mood with the coming of Winter. Reflects on the price of grapes and how that will affect the Italian wine-makers in the neighborhood. Raises the question of whether Fascism endangers religion. (DDLW #935).

Thanksgiving

The first week of November was an exciting week, what with a petition going out on All Souls' Day (it was an inspiration received at Holy Mass that very morning) and enough replies within forty-eight hours to pay off last month's printing bill.

Other contributions came in the form of food, including honey, coffee, and a succulent apple pie, daffodil bulbs for the back garden, cookies and cakes for our tea which was held during the course of the month, baskets of fruit and a coal stove, and enough furniture for the office and half a dozen unemployed families.

Last but not least, friendly editors, such as Father Harold Purcell, editor of *The Sign*, who collected the first eleven dollars towards THE CATHOLIC WORKER, have given the paper space in their columns: *The Rosary* published an article about it in the November issue; and *The Prairie Messenger*, published by the Benedictine Fathers in Saskatchewan, Canada, ran entire a letter we sent out to all schools and academies.

The circulation this month in the new format is 20,000 copies, and we would not have achieved this growth if it had not been for the help of our unemployed friends who have given us of their time, strength and prayers most unstintingly.

It is impossible to list the favors and help we have received. We can only pray in turn that God will bless our friends and well-wishers.

And Now a Note of Melancholy

Late fall is here. A haze hangs over the city. Fogs rise from the river, and the melancholy note of the river boats is heard at night. The leaves are dropping from the fig tree in the back yard. There is the smell of chestnuts in the air, and if you buy the chestnuts, most of them are wormy. It is better to make popcorn over the fire at night. For we have fires now.

The kettle sings on the range in the kitchen (the range cost eight dollars second-hand and doesn't burn much coal), and visitors to THE CATHOLIC WORKER office are drinking much tea and coffee. The stove in the front office has burst in its exuberance and has to be mended with stove clay and a piece of tin.

And there is also the smell of grapes in the air—rich, luscious Concord grapes. If this editorial has a melancholy note, it is not because chestnuts are wormy or because the stove has cracked, but because all our Italian neighbors are too poor this year to buy grapes and make wine. Grapes that used to be one dollar a box are now one dollar fifty. And the Italian fathers who love their wine and have it in lieu of fresh vegetables and fruits all during the long winter, are still out of jobs or on four-day-a-month work relief; and this year there is no pleasant smell of fermenting grapes, no disorderly heaps of mash dumped in the gutters.

And Mr. Rubino and Mr. Scaratino and Mr. Liguori will not rent a wine press together this year, and the children will not hang over them with breathless interest in the mysterious basement while they manipulate the press rented for the house.

And, what is worse, Mr. Rubino will not be dropping into the office of THE CATHOLIC WORKER, when he sees our light late at night, to console us for our long hours by the gift of a milk bottle of wine.

For the long hard winter is before us. Evictions are increasing, people come in to ask us to collect winter clothes and to help them find apartments where relief checks will be accepted.

We must work, and we must pray, and we meditate as we write this that it would be so much easier for all our Italian friends to work and pray, to have courage to fight and also to be patient, if they could make as usual their fragrant and cheering grape wine.

From the “Commonweal”

“It is this growth of militant atheism—of a contagious spirit of the repudiation of all forms of belief in God—which is more dangerous to the nations of the western world, our own among them, than the Red Army of Soviet Russia. Apparently opposing all that may be termed communistic is that other spirit which is vaguely termed Fascism—militant nationalisms of various types—which even although it may retain some sympathy with the religious tradition, if not a vital religious faith, is almost as dangerous to religion as Communism itself. This is so because it deifies a race, or a nation, or a materialistic cause of some sort or other, and seduces the souls of young people with glamorous idolatries. And still another, and the greatest enemy of religion, coming not from Russia, or from any exterior source, is the failure of Christians to live up to their own principles. Surely it is for this reason that the Pope has called the Christian world to reparation, in this Holy Year commemorating the nineteen hundredth anniversary of the Redemption.”

Catholic Labor Papers

Although we have called ourselves the only Catholic labor paper, and have been so greeted by friends of labor throughout the country, we wish to call attention to the fact that we are

simply the only Catholic paper which proclaims itself for the worker, through its masthead. There are most certainly many other Catholic papers which are exponents of the rights of labor, and are devoting themselves more and more in their columns to conditions of workers in this country. An outstanding example is the Buffalo paper, *The Echo*, which in addition to publishing diocesan news, covers all phases of the labor situation most thoroughly. Someone has been kind enough to send us a subscription to this splendid weekly, and we appreciate it.