

made my first confession right afterward, and looked forward the next morning to receiving communion.

I had no particular joy in partaking of these three sacraments, Baptism, Penance and Holy Eucharist. I proceeded about my own active participation in them grimly, coldly, making acts of faith, and certainly with no consolation whatever. One part of my mind stood at one side and kept saying, "What are you doing? Are you sure of yourself? What kind of an affection is this? What act is this you are going through? Are you trying to induce emotion, induce faith, partake of an opiate, the opiate of the people?" I felt like a hypocrite if I got down on my knees, and shuddered at the thought of anyone seeing me.

At my first communion I went up to the communion rail at the *Sanctus* bell instead of at the *Domine, non sum dignus*, and had to kneel there all alone through the consecration, through the *Pater Noster*, through the *Agnus Dei*—and I had thought I knew the Mass so well! But I felt it fitting that I be humiliated by this ignorance, by this precipitance.

I speak of the misery of leaving one love. But there was another love too, the life I had led in the radical movement. That very winter I was writing a series of articles, interviews with the workers, with the unemployed. I was working with the Anti-Imperialist League, a Communist affiliate, that was bringing aid and comfort to the enemy, General Sandino's forces in Nicaragua. I was just as much against capitalism and imperialism as ever, and here I was going over to the opposition, because of course the Church was lined up with property, with the wealthy, with the state, with capitalism, with all the forces of reaction. This I had been taught to think and this I still think to a great extent. "Too often," Cardinal Mundelein said, "has the Church lined up on the wrong side." "Christianity," Bakunin said, "is precisely the religion par excellence, because it exhibits, and manifests, to the fullest extent, the very nature and essence of every religious system, which is the impoverishment, en-

slavement, and annihilation of humanity for the benefit of divinity."

I certainly believed this, but I wanted to be poor, chaste and obedient. I wanted to die in order to live, to put off the old man and put on Christ. I loved, in other words, and like all women in love, I wanted to be united to my love. Why should not Forster be jealous? Any man who did not participate in this love would, of course, realize my infidelity, my adultery. In the eyes of God, any turning toward creatures to the exclusion of Him is adultery and so it is termed over and over again in Scripture.

I loved the Church for Christ made visible. Not for itself, because it was so often a scandal to me. Romano Guardini said the Church is the Cross on which Christ was crucified; one could not separate Christ from His Cross, and one must live in a state of permanent dissatisfaction with the Church.

The scandal of businesslike priests, of collective wealth, the lack of a sense of responsibility for the poor, the worker, the Negro, the Mexican, the Filipino, and even the oppression of these, and the consenting to the oppression of them by our industrialist-capitalist order—these made me feel often that priests were more like Cain than Abel. "Am I my brother's keeper?" they seemed to say in respect to the social order. There was plenty of charity but too little justice. And yet the priests were the dispensers of the Sacraments, bringing Christ to men, all enabling us to put on Christ and to achieve more nearly in the world a sense of peace and unity. The worst enemies would be those of our own household, Christ had warned us.

We could not root out the tares without rooting out the wheat also. With all the knowledge I have gained these twenty-one years I have been a Catholic, I could write many a story of priests who were poor, chaste and obedient, who gave their lives daily for their fellows, but I am writing of how I felt at the time of my baptism.

Not long afterward a priest wanted me to write a story of my conversion, telling how the social teaching of the

Church had led me to embrace Catholicism. But I knew nothing of the social teaching of the Church at that time. I had never heard of the encyclicals. I felt that the Church was the Church of the poor, that St. Patrick's had been built from the pennies of servant girls, that it cared for the emigrant, it established hospitals, orphanages, day nurseries, houses of the Good Shepherd, homes for the aged, but at the same time, I felt that it did not set its face against a social order which made so much charity in the present sense of the word necessary. I felt that charity was a word to choke over. Who wanted charity? And it was not just human pride but a strong sense of man's dignity and worth, and what was due to him in justice, that made me resent, rather than feel proud of so mighty a sum total of Catholic institutions. Besides, more and more they were taking help from the state, and in taking from the state, they had to render to the state. They came under the head of Community Chest and discriminatory charity, centralizing and departmentalizing, involving themselves with bureaus, building, red tape, legislation, at the expense of human values. By "they," I suppose one always means the bishops, but as Harry Bridges once pointed out to me, "they" also are victims of the system.

It was an age-old battle, the war of the classes, that stirred in me when I thought of the Sacco-Vanzetti case in Boston. Where were the Catholic voices crying out for these men? How I longed to make a synthesis reconciling body and soul, this world and the next, the teachings of Prince Peter Kropotkin and Prince Demetrios Gallitzin, who had become a missionary priest in rural Pennsylvania.

Where had been the priests to go out to such men as Francisco Ferrer in Spain, pursuing them as the Good Shepherd did His lost sheep, leaving the ninety and nine of their good parishioners, to seek out that which was lost, bind up that which was bruised. No wonder there was such a strong conflict going on in my mind and heart.

JOBS AND JOURNEYS

□ I never regretted for one minute the step which I had taken in becoming a Catholic, but I repeat that for a year there was little joy for me as the struggle continued. I knew a good priest who helped me along the way. I was living in New York that winter and went to confession in a church on West Fourteenth Street, Our Lady of Guadalupe. It was a narrow little church, served by the Augustinian Fathers of the Assumption, and there were Masses at seven, eight and nine o'clock each morning. Before every Mass priests came from the rectory next door to hear confessions. There were three confessional booths on either side of the entrance door, and there were bells on the confessional booths so that at any other time of the day one could ring a bell and a priest would appear. My priest's name was Father Zachary and his previous assignment had been in the Holy Land. He was a Spaniard, a gentle old man who was good and patient with me. He was so gentle that one welcomed his questions, and when he found that I was baptized but not confirmed he began preparing me for confirmation. He gave me Challoner's book of meditations to read and a St. Andrew's missal so that I could learn to follow the seasons of the Church, the saints of the day, and have the doctrinal instruction containing many quotations from the Fathers of the Church that the missal gave before each Sunday Mass.

One confessor years later told me he found little of Christ in my writing but much of self. I would have taken that criticism humbly except that he added, "I will tell you when to write." Since this priest was one who objected to all my social interests on the ground that it was too late to do anything except prepare for death, I left him and found another. Thank God one can change

one's confessor. As a matter of fact I have been singularly fortunate in good parish priests, order priests and diocesan, to whom I could go. I was happy indeed with Father Zachary.

In turn Father Zachary read some of my articles and short stories, and confessed that he found them very dull and unadorned. "You have no style," he would complain. "You are too grim, too realistic."

Often when I had finished my confession and my act of contrition and he had given me absolution, he would lean over and whisper, "Have you sold any stories lately?"

Such an interest was not as mundane as one might think. I was still working for the Anti-Imperialist League and Father Zachary told me to keep my Communist job until I found another one.

My confirmation was a joyous affair. I went one Sunday afternoon on the feast of Pentecost to the Convent of the Holy Souls on Eighty-fifth Street near Third Avenue. There, in company with a large group of adults, to the sweet singing of the nuns, I received the sacrament of confirmation. I took the name of Maria Teresa.

Back on Staten Island the following summer I did not suffer so much from being alone, because we had more children to take care of. Freda and Sasha had a friend who ran a school in Spuyten Duyvil called the Hoffman School of Individual Development. She wished to have a free summer that year, so she asked Freda to take a dozen of her children for the vacation months. Freda and I were both limited as to room, but between the two of us we could manage it. I took the littlest ones and Freda crowded in the big ones dormitory style; she cooked and I washed dishes. It was a happy summer. One cannot be miserable with a group of growing children around. There was little time to think.

When I went into town the following winter, I found housekeeping rooms on West Fourteenth Street in order to be near Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Freda and Sasha had long been toying with the idea of running a

restaurant, so they took a very large ten-room apartment with three rooms which opened into each other and there they started their venture. I spent a good deal of time with them. Eva Le Gallienne's troupe were across the street playing stock in an old theater. The members of the company often ate dinner with us, and came over after the performance. Though it was prohibition time, Sasha served drinks, and I never could understand why my friends left their venture poorer than when they started. They were typically Russian, large-hearted, generous, so doubtless they fed many who could not afford to pay. It was when I was working with the Fellowship of Reconciliation, eating at Sasha's and leaving Tamar in the Nazareth Day Nursery on Fifteenth Street that I wrote the play which afterward brought me a contract with Pathe.

It was a hard winter. My work was not difficult—hours were from ten to three—but I became ill with intestinal influenza and was weak and ailing. During the worst part of my illness, it happened that my sister was sick also. She had married the year before and was expecting a baby shortly, otherwise she would have come to my rescue as she often had.

My friends were busy also and did not know how ill I was. I lay in bed for several days. Fortunately I had food in the house, and milk was delivered at the door, so we managed, the baby and I, to get along. She played in the long gloomy dark room which faced north to a high apartment house on the next street. I was able to drag myself up every now and then to feed and bathe her and put her to bed. It was a grim few days because I had a high temperature. I lay there and thought of how horrible it would be if I should die and no one would know until the milkman found the bottles accumulating outside the door or the landlady came to collect the rent. It was not like the East Side tenement apartments that I had known where the neighbors ran in to see how you were getting on, with offers of a bowl of soup or a dish of fresh rolls. How I longed for my Jewish neighbors dur-

ing that time of illness! I had gone to the West Side and rented my two housekeeping rooms because I wanted to be near the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, but I made up my mind then that I would live hereafter on my beloved East Side. Here I was surrounded by the ordinary American with his own desire for privacy, for going his own way. I shall never forget that siege of illness in a rooming house where each one was isolated from the other, each afraid another would ask something from him. However, little Tamar did not seem to suffer too much during that illness of mine. She was fretty at times, but since she got little attention, she reconciled herself to my silence and played with her toys. She was almost three then and could already hold a big needle and try to sew.

In the spring of that year a friend who had lost her son came to live with me. She had had two children, her husband was dead, the older son was married and had little to do with her, and her younger son had committed suicide the month before. Lallah's grief and my own depression following my attack of sickness made these days sad ones. I had not been able to earn enough to pay the taxes on the house on the beach and they had accumulated. So I decided to work for the summer in a children's camp where I could keep Tamar with me and rent my little house to pay my debts. My parish church on Staten Island was Our Lady Star of the Sea in Huguenot, and on Saturday nights Marist Fathers helped hear confessions. After confession one Saturday in May when I was spending a week end on the island I spoke to the priest about getting work in a camp.

"Our novitiate in Prince's Bay is closed for the summer and there are only three priests and three brothers there, so why don't you come and cook for us? Brother Philip has been cooking, but he wants to work in the garden. We were to have a group of Mexican nuns to work in the kitchen, but we have not been able to get them, and we have a whole wing off the kitchen, chapel included, which you can have to yourself. You'll only have the

three meals to get and no marketing. The brothers do the washing and scrubbing."

It was my first contact with Father McKenna, and we became good friends at once. He was easy to talk with, a gentle, understanding soul who helped me along little by little, never judging or condemning my former comrades. He brought me books to read and introduced me to such writers as Karl Adam and showed me how to say the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. When my guests came, he brought candy and cigarettes for them, and drove them to the station as they came to and from the city. He had never seen any Communists and anarchists before, and they had never been so close to a priest. They were a little wary of each other and there was not much conversation between them.

He loved Tamar and took her around with him to the barns, to watch the brothers milk the cows and feed the chickens, and she was devoted to him. She found a nest of field mice when they were cutting hay and brought them in to make homes for them in muffin tins. She helped Brother Philip water the garden with a little sprinkler.

Between meals, sitting on a stool by a high kitchen table while the stew boiled on the stove and Tamar played with the pots and pans in the closet, I wrote stories and articles, one of which I sold to *The Commonwealth*, a Catholic weekly.

On the feast of the Assumption, August fifteenth, while I was in the kitchen preparing supper, I received a telephone call from California, from Pathe, saying they had liked a play which I had submitted to Metro-Goldwyn some months before. They would like me to sign a contract with them for writing dialogue on the Coast. I did not know whether they were going to use the play I had submitted. They talked of it with great enthusiasm, comparing it to Chekhov. They were full of the great things I was capable of.

I was delighted of course. Change was always welcome and I was glad to leave New York. It was one of those

small contracts, not the fabulous kind one reads about: a three-months affair, at one hundred and twenty-five dollars a week and transportation to and from the Coast.

Like all Hollywood-bound authors, I thought of the money that I would make that would free me for a simple life in the future and for work on the novel I was always writing.

The Marist novitiate was to reopen in September and my work was to have ended then anyway, but I parted from Father McKenna with sorrow.

It had been a wonderful summer. I had begun it with sadness, a heavy mood which was the result not only of my own weakness but Lallah's grief. As a matter of fact, I had begun my days there weeping. Father McKenna, catching me at it as I sat at the kitchen table, and not being able to get at the cause of my tears, had offered a Mass for me. The sorrow had gone at once, thanks, I firmly believed, to that good man's prayers, and the power of the Sacrament. I ended the summer with high hopes that were soon dispelled. In the first place I soon found I could save little money in California, in spite of a salary which I considered huge at that time. I had nothing to do, so what I received was like a retaining fee. But Lallah, who had come west with me, became ill and had to be hospitalized for a minor operation. Since there were no free hospitals that I could discover in our section of Los Angeles, I had to pay her bills. Another time, Lallah, Tamar and I were invited to a comrade's little ranch over the week end. Tamar was asked to stay a week and when I returned to work I was surprised to find a large bill for our hospitality.

My money evaporated week after week—it was only by rigid economy for the last month of my stay in Culver City where Pathe was located that I was able to save enough money to go to Mexico.

I suppose I had hopes, when I went west, of living a stimulating creative life, with time to read and study and write. There was plenty of time to read. I was cooped up in my own office, with chaise longue, having nothing to

do all day and every day, except to wait for mail from home and read. The atmosphere was not one conducive to study. It was hectic, crowded and yet I knew no one; stages were set up, productions were being put on piecemeal; no one knew what was going on or whether indeed anything were being put on at all. Occasionally a group of us, not one knowing the other, were summoned in to a most comfortable lounging room, where we sat in chairs with ash trays by our sides and viewed some stupid production (I can remember none of them now) and were invited to give our views on it. I remember one most inane office conference where we were supposed to discuss the plot of some such typical story as *The Grand Duchess and the Waiter*, and of course the waiter turns out to be a grand duke or prince. There was no thought. There was no discussion of ideas or attempt to portray ideas. The only serious films I had seen were probably *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Crime and Punishment*, and a few other so-called morbid foreign films which no one there was interested in. There was none of the universal appeal of *Paisan*, or *The Baker's Wife*, or *The Bicycle Thief*, or *Monsieur Vincent*. There seemed to be no common ground on which any of us could meet, we who passed each other in the corridors of the Colonial-residence-type building which housed the offices and studios of Pathe.

I knew Dudley Nichols from his newspaper days in New York and there were occasional visits, but he, who also intended to save his money and return east to live on a farm and write novels, had become one of the foremost screen writers there and he was as busy as I was idle. He was the newspaperman of genius who could take any material and make it come alive.

I was lonely, deadly lonely. And I was to find out then, as I found out so many times, over and over again, that women especially are social beings, who are not content with just husband and family, but must have a community, a group, an exchange with others. A child is not enough. A husband and children, no matter how busy

one may be kept by them, are not enough. Young and old, even in the busiest years of our lives, we women especially are victims of the long loneliness. Men may go away and become desert Fathers, but there were no desert mothers. Even the anchoresses led rather sociable lives, with bookbinding and spiritual counseling, even if they did have to stay in one place.

I would have gone back to New York when my contract was not renewed, but to me at that time New York was an occasion of sin. I hungered too much to return to Forster. I had to stay away for a while longer. So I went to Mexico.

I lived in Mexico as I lived in New York, with the poor. I took rooms with a Mexican family—an old one-armed woman, her daughter, and their orphaned nephew and niece. The daughter, who helped earn the living for the family by selling stockings from a pushcart in the little park of St. Joseph around the corner from their home, cooked a delicious meal for us every day. Breakfast and supper I prepared for Tamar and myself on a little oil stove. I was able to earn enough to remain in Mexico for six months, and to have in addition to my rooms in Mexico City a little stone hut in Xochimilco where birds flew in and out of the one shuttered window. There were no glass panes. There were no plumbing facilities; one brought jars of water from the village well and washed clothing and dishes in the canals which surrounded the many islands that made up Xochimilco.

Living was so cheap in Mexico that I would have remained perhaps if Tamar had not become ill. She recovered as soon as we returned to New York, where we arrived just after the May Day riots in Union Square. The great depression, which began with a stock market crash the autumn before while I was in California, was well under way.

More and more people were losing their jobs, more families were being evicted, the Unemployed Councils were being formed by the Communist groups and the Workers Alliance sprang into existence. It was a time for

pressure groups, for direct action, and radicalism was thriving among all groups except the Catholics. I felt out of it all. There was Catholic membership in all these groups of course, but no Catholic leadership. It was that very year that Pope Pius XI said sadly to Canon Cardijn, who was organizing the workers in Belgium, "The workers of the world are lost to the Church."

And yet for me personally that was an extraordinarily happy time for some reason or other. Maybe it was the deepening of my spiritual life. Maybe it was because I had sufficient interesting work to do to support Tamar and myself, and leave leisure for my own reading and writing. It was a beautiful clear summer in 1932, with sparkling weather, not too hot, so that after some of the research work I was doing at the library I was able to walk home and savor the beauty of the city and of the day. For there is a beauty of the city, of the wide avenues, of the clean houses on orderly streets, of trees and little porches, and there were streets I loved and walks I loved that were not in the slums where I was living.

One can conceive of a city with art and culture and music and architecture, and the flowering of all good things, as the image of the heavenly city. Heaven is pictured as a city, the heavenly Jerusalem. I was enjoying the city that summer.

There was the companionship of my brother John and his wife, a young Spanish girl whom he had met when he was living with me on the beach. Neither was yet twenty. For the first six months of his marriage he had worked on a newspaper. Then when the staff was cut, he was forced to accept the hospitality of Tessa's parents, who had two other daughters at home. They had a great sense of hospitality. "There is always enough for one more," the mother of the household said. "Everyone just takes a little less."

When the young couple found they were to become parents, there was that other Spanish saying to reassure them, "A baby is always born with a loaf of bread under its arm."

Now they were living with me, I was taking my turn at hospitality, and I enjoyed their company very much. My sister with her husband and two small babies had taken my five-year-old Tamar with them to their country home and I went down to them every fortnight for a long week end.

I was living in a "railroad flat," or a "dumb-bell apartment" as they are called, with a large room in front, a kitchen in the back and the two dark airless bedrooms in between. It was on the first floor and narrower than those upstairs and noisier, what with tenants going in and out and the milkman starting the long parade early in the day. But the house was spotlessly clean. The Riedel family lived on the third floor rent free and received a salary to keep the place clean, to dispose of the garbage and refuse from the other seven families who lived there. It was an Italian and German neighborhood in a section of the East Side where the houses have been torn down since, to make way for an immense housing project. I was attracted to the house on Fifteenth Street because of the beautiful back yards, separated by wooden fences. Each house had its flower garden, divided by a home-built wire fence from a cement-paved yard where the children could play without trampling flowers. There were tall untrimmed privet hedges against the back fences. When these were in bloom there was a pleasant acrid odor in the air. Beds of perennials grew in profusion, and kept increasing every year. Between borders of ice plant and widows' tears there were brick walks, and in the center of each plot there was, wonder of wonders, a fig tree which had to be well corseted in winter with straw and bound up to keep warm. There were many of these in New York, in the back yards of the Italians. Tamar needed a yard to play in and the additional rooms gave me space to invite my brother and sister-in-law to live with me in the fall.

There was no heat in the house, so we used the gas stove in the kitchen for both heating and cooking. In the coldest months, this meant that the bill would come to

twenty dollars a month. The rest of the apartment was also twenty. I felt that the four rooms with their cross ventilation from street to back garden gave me air and breathing space, and I settled down to work and writing with great peace and joy.

I was writing a novel. I have always been a journalist and a diarist pure and simple, but as long as I could remember, I dreamed in terms of novels. This one was to be about the depression, a social novel with the pursuit of a job as the motive and the social revolution as its crisis. There was to be the struggle between religion and otherworldliness, and communism and thisworldliness, replete with a heroine and hero and scores of fascinating characters. I put my own struggle and dreams of love into the book and was very happy writing it.

But my life was too full. I progressed slowly. I had to work for a living. I walked to and from my work. I arose early for Mass, and I began to go to daily communion for the first time in the four years I had been a Catholic. This was at the urging of a priest whom I never happened to see, to whom I spoke in the confessional, to whom I confided my struggles from week to week.

Father Zamien was Salesian and was not long afterward sent back to Yugoslavia. He was the kind of priest who gave you spiritual counsel, who recommended spiritual books to read, who advised daily Mass and daily communion and made you know your importance as a child of God.

In that little church there were two priests who heard confessions every morning before and after Mass, one on either side of the rear of the church. When Father Zamien was no longer there I turned to Father Pelligrini, who even now is still hearing confessions in his stifling little box on the right-hand side of the church of Our Lady, Help of Christians, on East Twelfth Street. On the other side of the church, the windows were open all summer, and your eyes could wander if the sermon was too long (and in Italian), out to the window boxes of the tenements on Avenue A. There were the everpresent pe-

tunias, the boxed basil, the tomato plants, and the morning glories climbing up the fire escapes.

Yes, I was happy that summer. In the evening I went back to the church for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Then in the quiet evening I went home to read the life of St. Teresa of Avila and her foundations. She charmed me completely.

After I had become a Catholic I began little by little to lose track of my friends. Being a Catholic, I discovered, put a barrier between me and others; however slight, it was always felt.

I still saw my Staten Island friends Freda and Sasha. There were also Mike Gold and his brothers George and Manuel and their wives who, the last year of my stay there, had bought a house in Staten Island down the road from me. We were still very close. In the fall when Tessa and John came to live with me Mike used to drop in often. It was before his marriage, and he longed for children. "All the world loves a pregnant woman," he would say wistfully, and he would lay his hand on Tessa's body.

His brother George was married to a glowing blonde girl from Greenpoint. They had two children and George did everything and anything to make a living for them. He made furniture; he and Gert took children to care for while their parents worked. That fall George was working with the Unemployed Councils which had been formed to combat unemployment, demand relief, protest evictions. Now there was a plan to rent trucks and bring groups to Washington, there to be met by other groups from all over the country. Those who could not go with a truck came by boxcar from as far west as Seattle, Portland and San Francisco and joined the trucks in some eastern city. A number of them gathered in Union Square to start the Hunger March, as they called it, to Washington.

George had told me of the projected trip. His job was to hire the trucks. There was an Unemployed Council in every neighborhood and the members garnered their small resources of money and men to go to Washington

and present the case of the destitute. The councils were Communist dominated, of course, but the rank and file membership was made up of every political color and creed.

Since I could leave my daughter with John and Tessa, I decided I would go to Washington, not as a delegate, but as a reporter, for *The Commonwealth*, the first Catholic publication for which I had written. At the same time as this demonstration of the unemployed, there was a Farmers' Convention in Washington, made up of rank and file small farmers and tenant farmers from around the country. This was also Communist inspired. *America*, the Jesuit weekly, offered to pay me for an article about that.

Getting an advance from *The Commonwealth* to cover expenses, I took the bus with Mary Heaton Vorse, that valiant labor reporter, whom I had known in the days when I worked for the old *Masses* and the *Liberator*. She knew all the reporters in Washington and we went to the home of one of them when we arrived to get the latest news on the demonstrators. Mary was always helping support her children and her children's children, so she traveled and lived as cheaply as she could, in lodging houses all over the world. She had worked for the labor movement in America in addition to writing stories for *Collier's* and the women's journals, stories which she called lollipops; but her real love was "Labor."

She had covered every major strike in the country. She knew the aristocrat of New England as well as the radical and the Bohemian; in her family there had been a long tradition of high thinking for generations back. Her first two husbands had died, and she had married Robert Minor, who took Earl Browder's place when he was imprisoned during the early years of World War II, as general secretary of the Communist party. Bob had struggled through from a faith in the I.W.W., the anarcho-syndicalist, to that of the Communist, with much soul-searching and study, Mary said, and was a sincere though a rather dull revolutionist. Later they separated, he to marry a younger woman (one with no career

of her own) and Mary to continue her work as a world reporter.

I had had such a peaceful summer and fall. Now at the beginning of December, I was in the thick of the struggle again, writing not the nice leisurely novel but the immediate flash story of revolt. That was how the newspapers interpreted it. It was an impressive demonstration. Leaving New York, the procession of old trucks and cars, such as the Joad family in *Grapes of Wrath* traveled in some years later in quest of land and work, paraded through various cities, and, where they could, stopped to hold meetings in Protestant churches and labor halls. In one such church in Wilmington, Delaware, the police broke up the meeting by throwing tear-gas bombs through the windows and when the marchers broke out from the church in disorderly fashion, clubbed and arrested those whom they suspected of being the leaders.

In spite of such incidents, and there were others, the hunger marchers persisted and went on to Washington. We had been late in starting, Mary and I, and when we arrived, they were there before us.

This was not long after the tear-gassing and routing of the veterans, who had encamped for a while in Washington to bring their plight before the legislators of the country. Now the papers were full of the Communist menace. There were scare headlines, and as a result of the hysteria built up by the press, police had stopped the procession of trucks as it entered Washington on Route One; there the men remained encamped for three days and nights. The road was closed and all other traffic was rerouted. On one side was a park of sorts and on the other railroad tracks; the police hemmed in the demonstrators, keeping them there with threats of tear gas and machine-gunning. The demonstrators slept in trucks and on the roadside those first days of December when the weather was already bitter, while the respectable citizen slept in his warm bed and read comfortably of the "reds" who had come to take over Washington. I do not think

the people themselves were frightened. Left to themselves they would reasonably have permitted the demonstration, have listened to the complaints, passed on the recommendations to the proper authorities, expecting in due course that something might be done.

But the newspapers had to have their story. With scare heads, yellow journalism, and staccato radio, the tense, nervous stories built up, of communism at home and Communist atrocities in the rest of the world.

If there was not a story, the newspapers would make a story. If there was not a war, the press would see to it that there was a class war, a war in which all the weapons were on the side of the authorities. The newspaper reporters were infected by their own journalism and began to beg city editors to give them tear-gas masks before they went out to interview the leaders of the unemployed marchers. They knew what they were building up to.

Mary Vorse and I stayed in a tourist house on Massachusetts Avenue, and ate cheaply in lunch wagons. We felt that when people were enduring the hardships these men and women were suffering, it was not the time for us to be comfortable. We ate frugally and we put up in dollar-a-night lodgings so there was something left over to contribute to the food fund of the strikers. Mary had always been that kind of a reporter. Her brand of journalism was different.

And then, after three days of mounting hysteria, suddenly permission was given to the marchers to proceed. On a bright sunny day the ragged horde triumphantly with banners flying, with lettered slogans mounted on sticks, paraded three thousand strong through the tree-flanked streets of Washington. I stood on the curb and watched them, joy and pride in the courage of this band of men and women mounting in my heart, and with it a bitterness too that since I was now a Catholic, with fundamental philosophical differences, I could not be out there with them. I could write, I could protest, to arouse the conscience, but where was the Catholic leadership in

the gathering of bands of men and women together, for the actual works of mercy that the comrades had always made part of their technique in reaching the workers?

How little, how puny my work had been since becoming a Catholic, I thought. How self-centered, how in-grown, how lacking in sense of community! My summer of quiet reading and prayer, my self-absorption seemed sinful as I watched my brothers in their struggle, not for themselves but for others. How our dear Lord must love them, I kept thinking to myself. They were His friends, His comrades, and who knows how close to His heart in their attempt to work for justice. I remembered that the first public act of our Lord recorded in the New Testament was the overthrowing of the money-changers' tables in the temple. The miracle at Cana, when Christ was present at the wedding feast and turned water into wine, has been written of as the first public act of our Lord. It was the first miracle, it was the sanctifying of marriage, but it was not the social act of overturning the tables of the money-changers, a divine courage on the part of this obscure Jew, going into the temple and with bold scorn for all the riches of this world, scattering the coins and the traffickers in gold.

The demands of the marchers were for social legislation, for unemployment insurance, for old-age pensions, for relief for mothers and children, for work. I remember seeing one banner on which was inscribed, "Work, not wages," a mysterious slogan having to do with man's dignity, his ownership of and responsibility for the means of production.

The years have passed, and most of the legislation called for by those workers is on the books now. I wonder how many realize just how much they owe the hunger marchers, who endured fast and cold, who were like the Son of Man, when He said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

When the demonstration was over and I had finished writing my story, I went to the national shrine at the

Catholic University on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. There I offered up a special prayer, a prayer which came with tears and with anguish, that some way would open up for me to use what talents I possessed for my fellow workers, for the poor.

As I knelt there, I realized that after three years of Catholicism my only contact with active Catholics had been through articles I had written for one of the Catholic magazines. Those contacts had been brief, casual. I still did not know personally one Catholic layman.

And when I returned to New York, I found Peter Maurin—Peter the French peasant, whose spirit and ideas will dominate the rest of this book as they will dominate the rest of my life.

Part Three

**LOVE IS THE
MEASURE**



PEASANT OF THE PAVEMENTS

□ When I walked into my apartment, I found waiting for me a short, stocky man in his mid-fifties, as ragged and rugged as any of the marchers I had left. I like people to look their part, and if they are workers, to look like workers, and if they are peasants to look like peasants. I like to see the shape of a man's hands, the strength of his neck and shoulders.

This man introduced himself briefly: "I am Peter Maurin." He pronounced it Maw-rin, with the accent on the first syllable, deliberately anglicizing the word. "George Shuster, editor of *The Commonwealth*, told me to look you up. Also, a red-headed Irish Communist in Union Square told me to see you. He says we think alike."

How to describe Peter and the effect he had on me. Certainly I knew at once that he was French. It was difficult to become accustomed to his accent, which he kept although he had already been twenty years in America. He was intensely alive, on the alert, even when silent, engaged in reading or in thought. When he talked, the tilt of his head, his animated expression, the warm glow in his eyes, the gestures of his hands, his shoulders, his whole body, compelled your attention. I remember several things about that first meeting, characteristics of Peter that were to impress themselves more and more on me during the years that followed. He spoke in terms of ideas, rather than personalities, and he stressed the importance of theory. As people gathered around us in the movement which sprang up, this attribute stood out. While others were always analyzing, talking about one another, using one another's lives and attitudes to illustrate ideas, Peter was always impersonal, delicately

scrupulous never to talk about others, never to make the derogatory remark.

"Lenin said, 'There can be no revolution without a theory of revolution,' so I am trying to give the theory of a green revolution," he said.

He delighted in the title of agitator. Though he spoke of ideas, and men of ideas, he made these ideas dynamic by coloring them in his own way—"I knew a man who —" or "Peguy's mother mended chairs in Notre Dame Cathedral—"

The nearest he came to being critical with me was to tell me that my education lacked Catholic background. He began to give it to me by talking about the history of the Church, by going even further back into time and speaking of the prophets of Israel as well as the Fathers of the Church. His friends were Jews, Protestants, agnostics, as well as Catholics, and he found a common ground with all in what he termed the Thomistic doctrine of the common good. He ignored differences to stress concordance. He did not use such terms as ecumenical, though he was not afraid of the unusual word (agronomic universities were part of his program), but he thought in terms of our common humanity, of our life here today. He stressed the need of building a new society within the shell of the old—that telling phrase from the preamble to the I.W.W. constitution, "a society in which it is easier for people to be good," he added with a touching simplicity, knowing that when people are good, they are happy.

He was a man of tremendous ambition, in spite of his simplicity, or perhaps because of it. He wanted to make a new synthesis, as St. Thomas had done in the Middle Ages, and he wanted to enlist the aid of a group of people in doing this. He was no more afraid of the non-Catholic approach to problems than St. Thomas was of the Aristoteelian.

With all his knowledge, he was no isolated scholar. It was the state of the world which filled him with these vast desires. Man was placed here with talents, to play his

part, and on every side he saw the children of this world wiser in their generation than the children of light. They built enormous industrial plants, bridges, pipe lines, skyscrapers, with imagination and vision they made their blue prints, and with reckless and daredevil financing made them actual in steel and concrete. Wheels turned and engines throbbed and the great pulse of the mechanical and physical world beat strong and steady while men's pulses sickened and grew weaker and died. Man fed himself into the machine.

Peter rejoiced to see men do great things and dream great dreams. He wanted them to stretch out their arms to their brothers, because he knew that the surest way to find God, to find the good, was through one's brothers. Peter wanted this striving to result in a better physical life in which all men would be able to fulfill themselves, develop their capacities for love and worship, expressed in all the arts. He wanted them to be able to produce what was needed in the way of homes, food, clothing, so that there was enough of these necessities for everyone. A synthesis of "cult, culture and cultivation," he called it, as he tried to give me the long view, the vision.

It was hard for me to understand what he meant, thinking as I always had in terms of cities and immediate need of men for their weekly pay check. Now I can see clearly what he was talking about, but I am faced with the problem of making others see it. I can well recognize the fact that people remaining as they are, Peter's program is impossible. But it would become actual, given a people changed in heart and mind, so that they would observe the new commandment of love, or desire to.

Peter made you feel a sense of his mission as soon as you met him. He did not begin by tearing down, or by painting so intense a picture of misery and injustice that you burned to change the world. Instead, he aroused in you a sense of your own capacities for work, for accomplishment. He made you feel that you and all men had great and generous hearts with which to love God. If you once recognized this fact in yourself you would ex-

pect and find it in others. "The art of human contacts," Peter called it happily. But it was seeing Christ in others, loving the Christ you saw in others. Greater than this, it was having faith in the Christ in others without being able to see Him. Blessed is he that believes without seeing.

Although Peter came to me with sheaves of writing in every pocket, which he either read aloud, or pressed upon me to read and study, he had not begun to write till late in life. All his writing, even his letters to me, were in phrased sentences, broken up to look like free verse. He used this device to compel attention, to make for more reflective reading but also because some of his writings had a swing, a rhythm like verse. He liked to consider himself a troubadour of Christ, singing solutions to the world's ills, insinuating them into men's ears with catchy phrases.

I do not remember with what essays he introduced himself to me. It might have been "The Dynamite of the Church" or "When the Irish Were Irish, a Thousand Years Ago."

I had been coffined in a bus for eight hours; I was anxious for quiet, for a cup of coffee. I was anxious to greet my child and Tessa and John. I am sure that first night I was no more than polite. In fact, had it not been for Tessa, with her unfailing hospitality, her ready attention to guests, I might not have met Peter at all. For my brother was a conventional American and Peter often gave the impression of being a dangerous and unbalanced radical when he began "indoctrinating" someone who was unprepared. I speak as the conventional American myself, in spite of years in the radical movement. Peter was the most persistent soul in the world and he was looking for apostles to share his work. When he read the articles I had written in *America*, *The Commonwealth* and *The Sign*, he was convinced that I was the one who was to work with him. Before he knew me well he went about comparing me to a Catherine of Siena who would move mountains and have influence on governments,

temporal and spiritual. He was a man of enthusiasm and always saw great talents in people.

When he came back the next day, for we did not share ideas at length that first night, he began at once on what he called my education. "Indoctrination" was his word. He not only wished to give me a Catholic outline of history—but he also wished to repeat over and over again his program of action; round-table discussions, houses of hospitality and agronomic universities. We were to popularize this program for immediate needs, which in itself would be the seed for a long-range program, a green revolution, by publishing a paper for the man in the street.

What Peter called round-table discussions I was already familiar enough with as meetings, whether indoors or from a soapbox. I could see the necessity for them, "for the clarification of thought," as he always said, and I knew that humanly speaking they would always go on. But he wanted more than supper-table conversations; he wanted to plan meetings too for the beginnings of a school, to bring the workers and scholars together.

Since I came from a newspaper family, with my two older brothers working on newspapers at that time, and my father still a writer though no longer an editor, I could see the need for such a paper as Peter described.

But how were we going to start it?

Peter did not pretend to be practical along these lines. "I enunciate the principles," he declared grandly.

"But where do we get the money?" I asked him, clinging to the "we," though he was making clear his role as theorist.

"In the history of the saints, capital was raised by prayer. God sends you what you need when you need it. You will be able to pay the printer. Just read the lives of the saints."

St. Francis de Sales scattered leaflets like any radical. St. John of God sold newspapers on the streets. We didn't have to do things on a big scale, Peter made it clear.

I had been reading the life of Rose Hawthorne not long before, how she started what has since become a chain of cancer hospitals in a four-room tenement apartment such as the one I was living in. Why not start a newspaper in the same way? I began to look on our kitchen as an editorial office, my brother as an assistant to write heads and to help with mechanical make-up. Tamar and I could go out to sell papers on the streets!

Peter was very optimistic in his expectations of people. At first he thought that his priest friend who had a large uptown parish would provide the basement of his church for an office, and a mimeograph machine for printing press. Since Father Scully provided him with a dollar a day for city expenses while he was working for him, he used to go to see him often in those early days of our acquaintance. I, too, wanted to meet Peter's friend and went one time to his rectory. He was away at the time, so I turned to the church next door and went in for a visit. There was Peter, the only other one besides myself in the church at that moment, and he did not see me come in, but sat there, before the Blessed Sacrament, motionless, quiet, absorbed, gazing altarward. Every now and then I saw his forefinger rise, count off a few points, and then stillness again.

I thought, as I looked at him there, how much he looked like pictures of St. John Bosco. St. John Bosco was an Italian peasant who became a priest and built up a tremendous number of boy's hospices and trade schools throughout the world. The conviction came over me that Peter too was a man of vision.

My impatience kept me from waiting longer for Father Scully—he was pastor of a big parish and dealt with educational affairs in the diocese besides running the camp at Mount Tremper as a hobby—truly a very busy man. My mind turned to printers. Finding that I could have twenty-five hundred copies of an eight-page tabloid printed for fifty-seven dollars by the Paulist Press, I decided to use two small checks I had just received for arti-

cles for the first printing bill, rather than for the rent or gas and electric. We would sell the paper, I decided, for a cent a copy, to make it so cheap that anyone could afford to buy.

Peter had his own ideas as to what was to be in that paper. When the first issue came out the following May Day with articles about labor, strikes, unemployment, factual accounts, columns, features, in addition to half a dozen of Peter's "Easy Essays," as John named them, he protested.

"Everybody's paper is nobody's paper," he said. And I realized that in his simplicity, in his lofty concept of his mission, he wanted nothing but his own essays to be printed, over and over, and broadcast throughout the country. He knew that he had a message. His confidence looked like conceit and vanity to the unknowing. He had a message, and he was filled with the glow of it, night and day. He lived for the work he was called to do, and the days were not long enough for research in the library, for the round-table discussions which took place wherever he happened to be, whether in coffee shop, on street corners, public squares, streetcar or bus.

It was amazing how little we understood each other at first. But Peter was patient. He wanted to call the paper *The Catholic Radical*, but with my Communist background, I insisted on calling it *The Catholic Worker*. Peter said, "Man proposes, but woman disposes." It was always with humor, never with bitterness or malice, that we differed.

I did not fully realize why this was until much later, when I finally could pin him down to talking about himself. He was a Frenchman; I was an American. He was a man twenty years older than I and infinitely wiser. He was a man, I was a woman. We looked at things differently. He was a peasant; I was a city product. He knew the soil; I the city. When he spoke of workers, he spoke of men who worked at agriculture, building, at tools and machines which were the extension of the hand of man.

When I spoke of workers, I thought of factories, the machine, and man the proletariat and slum dweller, and so often the unemployed.

He was born, he told us, in a small French community, two hundred miles from Barcelona, one of a family of twenty-three children. His own mother died, after giving birth to five children, and his father married again and there were eighteen more children. Among them now there are nuns and some of his brothers are religious.

"My mother's name," Peter said, "was Marie Pages. She died in 1885. Of her five children only I and Celestin, a brother who was eighteen months younger than I, and my sister Marie, two years younger than my brother, were left. My whole name was Aristide Pierre. Pierre was my grandfather and my godfather. He died at the age of ninety-four and he was never sick. He worked in the fields until he was eighty-five, and when he could no longer because of his eyes, stayed home and made baskets and recited his rosary. He liked to work for he knew it was good for him.

"The last I heard of my brother he was the head of a school in Paris, St. Clotilde's, a parish school. He had been a Christian Brother, but when they were secularized they no longer wore the garb but did continue to teach just the same. One of my half brothers taught for the Christian Brothers' School and he was married to a schoolteacher, who taught in the public school. In the last war he had a bullet in his body seventy-one days when he was taken prisoner by the Germans. I was with the Christian Brothers for about five years.

"Celestin was teaching in Pueblo, Mexico, when the First World War broke out, and he returned to France, and because he had not served his time in the army, he was put in the medical corps. He was buried alive by one shell bursting near him, and unburied by another. Another half brother was lost in the war and there were five others in that war and maybe some in this second.

"My youngest half sister was a weakling but got stronger as she grew older. She studied in England and

she is a nun, I don't know what order. She is head of a school in Bolivia."

Once as we sat around the table at dinner Peter was giving us slogans and he proposed this one: "Eat what you raise and raise what you eat." We asked him what they ate in his family when he was a boy.

"We did not eat the calves, we sold them," he said. "We are salt pork everyday. We raised no hops, and there was no beer. We raised no grapes, so no wine. We had very little meat. We had plenty of bread—there was a communal oven. We had plenty of butter; we had eggs. We had codfish from the Brittany fishermen. They went all the way to Newfoundland and Iceland to fish. We had vegetable soups, salads and cheese.

"It was in 1882 when the public-school system started (I was five years old). It was obligatory in every village. My mother and father could not speak French, only a dialect like Catalan. (Joffre was born in French Catalonia and Foch in Basque. Catalonian is spoken in Barcelona.) Our home language was more Latin than French. The name of our town was a Latin one, Oultet.

"The seat of our diocese was twelve miles away, and our parish church two miles. Oultet had fifteen families and in the parish there were ten villages. There were two priests who worked very hard. To help earn their livelihood they worked in the garden. The villagers provided them with wood, and they got some pay from the state, a compensation which was regulated by the concordat made by Napoleon.

"My family owned eighty sheep and there was one herder for all the village. He had a helper in summer. There were probably three thousand sheep in the flock and they grazed off what was still communal land. It was very cold in winter. We used branches from the trees for fuel, cutting them every three years. The leaves were for the sheep and the branches for firewood. We cooked at an open fireplace.

"My father is dead, and my stepmother must be seventy-five by now. Her name was Rosalie. She was

nineteen when she married my father. Last I heard, my brother was still farming and dealing in cattle.

"I lived there in the southern part of France, a peasant, on the soil, until I was fourteen. After that for a time I was a cocoa salesman traveling around France. Then while I was teaching at the Christian Brothers' School I was a member of a study club in Paris. At the same time Charles Peguy was there, but I did not know him, nor was I influenced by him, though people say I write like him. Instead I was interested in a group which published a paper twice a week, called *Le Sillon*. It had nothing to do with the decentralist movement, no, but it was interested in ethics. It understood the chaos of the times. Marc Sangnier was editor and backer of the paper. Later my friends got out a weekly paper called *The Spirit of Democracy*. They were looking for an ideology. They were preoccupied about the idea of an elite in a democracy.

"I did not like the idea of revolution. I did not like the French Revolution, not the English Revolution. I did not wish to work to perpetuate the proletariat so I never became a member of a union. Besides I was an unskilled worker. I was always interested in the land and men's life on the land.

"That is why I went homesteading to Canada in 1909, but after two years, when my partner was killed, I moved about the country with work gangs and entered this country in 1911, where I have been ever since."

Probably it was the sight of the poverty of Paris slums, and the thought of his peasant background, and the reading of Prince Kropotkin, that first led Peter to think of moving to Canada to settle on the land.

The old Biblical dictum of not letting the sun set either on wrath or on an unpaid workman is not in practice in our industrial system. Once Peter went to jail in Illinois when he was working for the railroad. The job finished, he set out for Chicago where he was to be paid. The "gandy dancers," as these workers were called, had to ride freight trains, which was illegal, in order to get

back to the city. They were often taken off, arrested and confined to jail as vagrants and set loose again, either to repeat their misdemeanor or to walk the long trek into the city. Yes, Peter was well acquainted with poverty, and injustice, rudeness and abuse.

He worked on farms, in brickyards, in steel mills, at every kind of unskilled labor, from Chicago to New York. He settled in Chicago for a time and gave French lessons, using the methods, so I understand, of the Berlitz School, and was successful at it. He read constantly, he worked and he taught. He was always the teacher. When he could not get people to listen, he wrote out his ideas in neat, lettered script, duplicated the leaflets and distributed them himself on street corners, an undignified apostolate.

For the seven years before I met him, he had worked as caretaker in New York State at a boys' camp during the winter. As far as I could gather, he lived with the horse in the barn. He mended the roads, broke rock and cut ice.

Peter was vehemently opposed to the wage system, so he received in return for his labor, which he pointed out was voluntarily "given," the return "gift" of enough food and clothing from the village store to supply his needs, a place to sleep and the use of the priest's library, without which he never would have stayed upstate so long. During slack seasons he came to New York and indoctrinated in Union Square, sleeping on the Bowery in Uncle Sam's Hotel, on the corner of Houston Street, in a bed which cost him forty cents a night. Often he sat up in coffee houses, or in the park, because his "brother" had come to him with a greater need than his own. He never refused to give alms, no matter how poor he was. He believed in poverty and loved it and felt it a liberating force. He differentiated between poverty and destitution, but the two often came close together in his life, when to give to others he had to strip himself.

He never had more than the clothes on his back, but he took the Gospel counsel literally—"if anyone asks for

thy coat give him thy cloak too." That is, if he encountered anyone needing a coat, and he had already given his own away, he would take the person to some friend and ask for a coat for him. He went in all simplicity to men like Thomas Woodlock of the *Wall Street Journal*, and John Moody of the Moody Investment Service, and not only asked them for things, but also discussed finance capitalism, unemployment and usury with them.

He ate on the Bowery when he was in New York, at cheap restaurants and of poor fare. If he had no money he went without food. He always advised people to beg if they were in need. But I know he did not like to beg himself. He preferred to go without. I used to taunt him gently with this.

"That is why people prefer going on relief, getting aid from the state," I told him. "They prefer that to taking aid from their family. It isn't any too easy, you know, to be chided by your family for being a failure. People who are out of work are always considered failures. They prefer the large bounty of the great, impersonal mother, the state."

But the fact remained, he always reminded me, no matter what people's preferences, that we are our brother's keeper, and the unit of society is the family; that we must have a sense of personal responsibility to take care of our own, and our neighbor, at a personal sacrifice. "That is a first principle," he always said. "It is not the function of the state to enter into these realms. Only in times of great crisis, like floods, hurricane, earthquake or drought, does public authority come in. Charity is personal. Charity is love." He admitted we were in a crisis then, but he wanted none of state relief. While other papers, monthly, weekly and daily, displayed the "blue eagle" of the National Recovery Administration, he would have no part in co-operating with the state.

Peter saw only the land movement as the cure for unemployment and irresponsibility, and the works of mercy as the work at hand, ignoring the immediate needs of the workers in the unions, their conflicts and demands.

I comforted myself by saying, "Men are more single-minded. They are the pure of heart." But I continued to think in terms of unions and strikes as an immediate means of bettering the social order. I could not blind myself to the conflict between us, the conflict that would continue with one or another who came to join in the movement later. When Peter said, "Everybody's paper is nobody's paper," when he protested the coverage of strike news, or the introduction of the personal element into the work by feature story, he was envisaging a sheet carrying nothing but his own phrased writings, regrouped, rewritten principles to apply to whatever situation came up, local, federal or world crisis. He had lived alone for so long, had for so long been a single apostle, that he did not realize how grim the struggle was going to be.

On two occasions indeed he was ready to give it up, to retire, to become silent in the face of opposition. Once it was when some of our young workers wanted whatever money contributed to us to be used for propaganda, printing, and the support of the editors rather than the feeding of the poor who came to our door.

The opposition that went on over breadlines and the housing of what this young group called "the derelicts," the "rotten lumber," the "deadwood," was such that Peter got up from the table one evening and turning to me said, "Come, let us go. Let us leave the paper and the house to them." I refused to give it up and after two years the others left and they in turn founded their own journal and bought a piece of property to be used as a summer school. Both failed after a few years.

The other occasion was during the beginning of World War II, when we had already been suffering grave criticism for our stand on the Ethiopian and the Spanish wars. "Perhaps silence would be better for a time than to continue our opposition to war. Men are not ready to listen," Peter said. Again I would not give up, and though we opposed the war and upheld the stand of the conscientious objector and the absolutist who advocated nonpay-

ment of taxes and nonregistration we were able to continue and there was no attempt made on the part of Church or state to suppress us. Peter may have been right on both occasions; silence may have been better. We have always acknowledged the primacy of the spiritual, and to have undertaken a life of silence, manual labor and prayer might have been the better way. But I do not know. God gives us our temperaments, and in spite of my pacifism, it is natural for me to stand my ground, to continue in what actually amounts to a class war, using such weapons as the works of mercy for immediate means to show our love and to alleviate suffering.

And the weapons of journalism! My whole life had been in journalism and I saw the world in terms of class conflict. I did not look upon class war as something to be stirred up, as the Marxist did. I did not want to increase what was already there but to mitigate it. When we were invited to help during a strike, we went to perform the works of mercy, which include not only feeding the hungry, visiting the imprisoned, but enlightening the ignorant and rebuking the unjust. We were ready to "endure wrongs patiently" for ourselves (this is another of the spiritual works of mercy) but we were not going to be meek for others, enduring *their* wrongs patiently.

When I was afterward accused of class-war tactics I retorted with St. Augustine, "The bottle always smells of the liquor it once held." But I did not feel the criticism just.

Peter used to say when we covered strikes and joined picket lines, "Strikes don't strike me." Yet he took the occasion to come out on the picket line to distribute leaflets upon which some single point was made. "To change the hearts and minds of men," he said. "To give them vision—the vision of a society where it is easier for men to be good."

PAPER, PEOPLE AND WORK

□ We started publishing *The Catholic Worker* at 436 East Fifteenth Street (now at 39 Spring Street) in May, 1933, with a first issue of 2,500 copies. Within three or four months the circulation bounded to 25,000, and it was cheaper to bring it out as an eight-page tabloid on newsprint rather than the smaller-sized edition on better paper we had started with. By the end of the year we had a circulation of 100,000 and by 1936 it was 150,000. It was certainly a mushroom growth. It was not only that some parishes subscribed for the paper all over the country in bundles of 500 or more. Zealous young people took the paper out in the streets and sold it, and when they could not sell it even at one cent a copy, they gave free copies and left them in streetcar, bus, barber shop and dentist's and doctor's office. We got letters from all parts of the country from people who said they had picked up the paper on trains, in rooming houses. One letter came from the state of Sonora in Mexico and we read with amazement that the reader had tossed in an uncomfortable bed on a hot night until he got up to turn over the mattress and under it found a copy of *The Catholic Worker*. A miner found a copy five miles underground in an old mine that stretched out under the Atlantic Ocean off Nova Scotia. A seminarian said that he had sent out his shoes to be half-soled in Rome and they came back to him wrapped in a copy of *The Catholic Worker*. These letters thrilled and inspired the young people who came to help, sent by Brothers or Sisters who taught in the high schools. We were invited to speak in schools and parishes, and often as a result of our speaking others came in to help us. On May Day, those first few years, the streets were literally lined with papers. Look-

ing back on it, it seemed like a gigantic advertising campaign, entirely unpremeditated. It grew organically, Peter used to say happily, and not through organization. "We are not an organization, we are an organism," he said.

First there was Peter, my brother and I. When John took a job at Dobb's Ferry, a young girl, Dorothy Weston, who had been studying journalism and was a graduate of a Catholic college, came to help. She lived at home and spent her days with us, eating with us and taking only her carfare from the common fund. Peter brought in three young men from Columbus Circle, whom he had met when discussing the affairs of the world there, and of these one became bookkeeper (that was his occupation when he was employed), another circulation manager, and the third married Dorothy Weston. Another girl came to take dictation and help with mailing the paper, and she married the circulation manager. There were quite a number of romances that first year—the paper appealed to youth. Then there were the young intellectuals who formed what they called Campion Committees in other cities as well as New York, who helped to picket the Mexican and German consulates and who distributed literature all over the city. Workers came in to get help on picket lines, to help move dispossessed families and make demonstrations in front of relief offices. Three men came to sell the paper on the street, and to eat their meals with us. Big Dan had been a truck driver and a policeman. The day he came in to see us he wanted nothing more than to bathe his tired feet. That night at supper Peter indoctrinated him on the dignity of poverty and read some of Father Vincent McNabb's *Nazareth or Social Chaos*. This did not go over so well, all of us being city people, and Father McNabb advocating a return to the fields, but he made Dan Orr go out with a sense of a mission, not worrying about shabby clothes or the lack of a job. Dan began to sell the paper on the streets and earned enough money to live on. He met others who had found subsistence jobs, carrying

sandwich signs or advertising children's furniture by pushing a baby carriage, a woman who told fortunes in a tea shop, a man who sold pretzels, which were threaded on four poles one on each corner of an old baby carriage. He found out their needs, and those of their families, and never left the house in the morning without bundles of clothes as well as his papers.

Dan rented a horse and wagon in which to deliver bundles of the paper each month. (We had tried this before he came but someone had to push the horse while the other led it. We knew nothing about driving a wagon.) Dan loved his horse. He called it Catholic Action, and used to take the blanket off my bed to cover the horse in winter. We rented it from a German Nazi on East Sixteenth Street, and sometimes when we had no money he let us have the use of it free for a few hours. It rejoiced our hearts to move a Jewish family into their new quarters with his equipment.

Dan said it was a pious horse and that when he passed St. Patrick's Cathedral, the horse genuflected. He liked to drive up Fifth Avenue, preferably with students who had volunteered their help, and shout, "Read *The Catholic Worker*" at the top of his lungs. He was anything but dignified and loved to affront the dignity of others.

One time he saw me coming down the street when he was selling the paper in front of Gimbel's and began to yell, "Read *The Catholic Worker!* Romance on every page." A seminarian from St. Louis, now Father Dreisoner, took a leaf from Dan's book and began selling the paper on the corner of Times Square and at union meetings. He liked to stand next to a comrade selling *The Daily Worker*, and as the one shouted "Read *The Daily Worker*," he in turn shouted, "Read *The Catholic Worker* daily." Between sales they conversed.

Another of Peter's friends was an old Armenian who wrote poetry in a beautiful mysterious script which delighted my eyes. He carried his epic around with him always. He was very little and wore a long black overcoat which reached to his heels and a black revolutionary

hat over his long white hair. He had a black cat whom he called Social Justice, mimicking Big Dan. She was his constant companion. He used my washrag to wipe her face with after eating. He prepared dishes for us with rice and meat wrapped in grape leaves, held together with toothpicks. He slept on a couch in the kitchen for a time. Once when Tamar was tearing around the house playing with Freddy Rubino, the little boy who lived upstairs, and I told her to be a little more quiet, that Mr. Minas was asleep in the next room, she said mischievously, "I don't care if the Pope is asleep in the next room, we want to play and make noise." Day and night there were many meetings in the converted barber shop which was our office, and Tamar heard plenty of noise from us. When someone asked her how she liked *The Catholic Worker* she wrinkled up her nose and said she liked the farming-commune idea, but that there was too much talk about all the rest.

Peter, the "green" revolutionist, had a long-term program which called for hospices, or houses of hospitality, where the works of mercy could be practiced to combat the taking over by the state of all those services which could be built up by mutual aid; and farming communes to provide land and homes for the unemployed, whom increasing technology was piling up into the millions. In 1933, the unemployed numbered 13,000,000.

The idea of the houses of hospitality caught on quickly enough. The very people that Peter brought in, who made up our staff at first, needed a place to live. Peter was familiar with the old I.W.W. technique of a common flophouse and a pot of mulligan on the stove. To my cost, I too had become well acquainted with this idea.

Besides, we never had any money, and the cheapest, most practical way to take care of people was to rent some apartments and have someone do the cooking for the lot of us. Many a time I was cook and cleaner as well as editor and street seller. When Margaret, a Lithuanian girl from the mining regions of Pennsylvania came to us, and took over the cooking, we were happy indeed. She

knew how to make a big pot of mashed potatoes with mushroom sauce which filled everyone up nicely. She was a great soft creature with a little baby, Barbara, who was born a few months after she came to us. Margaret went out on May Day with the baby and sold papers on the street. She loved being propagandist as well as cook. When Big Dan teased her, she threatened to tell the "pasture" of the church around the corner.

To house the women we had an apartment near First Avenue which could hold about ten. When there were arguments among them, Margaret would report them with gusto, giving us a blow-by-blow account. Once when she was telling how one of the women abused her so that she "felt as though the crown of thorns was pressing right down on her head" (she was full of these mystical experiences), Peter paused in his pacing of the office to tell her she needed to scrub the kitchen floor. Not that he was ever harsh, but he was making a point that manual labor was the cure of all such quarreling. Margaret once told Bishop O'Hara of Kansas City that when she kissed his ring, it was just like a blood transfusion—she got faint all over.

Jacques Maritain came to us during these early days and spoke to the group who were reading *Freedom and the Modern World* at that time. He gave special attention to the chapter on the purification of means. Margaret was delighted with our distinguished guest, who so evidently loved us all, and made him a box of fudge to take home with him when he sailed for France a few weeks later.

Ah, those early days that everyone likes to think of now since we have grown so much bigger; that early zeal, that early romance, that early companionableness! And how delightful it is to think that the young ones who came into the work now find the same joy in community. It is a permanent revolution, this Catholic Worker Movement.

In New York we were soon forced by the increasing rent of three apartments and one store to move into a house on the West Side. We lived on West Charles Street,

all together, men and women, students and workers, about twenty of us. In the summer young college girls and men came for months to help us, and, in some cases, returned to their own cities to start houses of hospitality there. In this way, houses started in Boston, Rochester, Milwaukee, and other cities. Within a few years there were thirty-three houses of hospitality and farms around the country.

One of the reasons for the rapid growth was that many young men were coming out of college to face the prospect of no job. If they had started to read *The Catholic Worker* in college, they were ready to spend time as volunteers when they came out. Others were interested in writing, and houses in Buffalo, Chicago, Baltimore, Seattle, St. Louis and Philadelphia, to name but a few cities, published their own papers and sold them with the New York *Catholic Worker*. A *Catholic Worker* was started in Australia and one in England. Both papers are still in existence, but the New York *Catholic Worker* is the only one published in the United States. The English and Australian papers are neither pacifist nor libertarian in their viewpoint, but the Australian paper is decentralist as well as strongly pro-labor. The English paper concentrates on labor organization and legislation "These papers have part of the program," Peter said, "but ours makes a synthesis—with vision."

The coming of war closed many of the houses of hospitality, but with new ones reopening there are still more than twenty houses and farms. When the young men in the work were released from service, most of them married and had to think in terms of salaries, jobs to support their growing families. The voluntary apostolate was for the unwilling celibate and for the unemployed as well as for the men and women, willing celibates, who felt that running hospices, performing the works of mercy, working on farms, was their vocation, just as definitely a vocation as that of the professed religious.

Voluntary poverty means a good deal of discomfort in

these houses of ours. Many of the houses throughout the country are without central heating and have to be warmed by stoves in winter. There are back-yard toilets for some even now. The first Philadelphia house had to use water drawn from one spigot at the end of an alley, which served half a dozen other houses. It was lit with oil lamps. It was cold and damp and so unbelievably poverty-stricken that little children coming to see who were the young people meeting there exclaimed that this could not be a *Catholic* place; it was too poor. We must be Communists. They were well acquainted with the Communist point of view since they were Puerto Rican and Spanish and Mexican and this was at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War.

How hard a thing it is to hear such criticisms made. Voluntary poverty was only found among the Communists; the Negro and white man on the masthead of our paper suggested communism; the very word "worker" made people distrust us at first. We were not taking the position of the great mass of Catholics, who were quite content with the present in this world. They were quite willing to give to the poor, but they did not feel called upon to work for the things of this life for others which they themselves esteemed so lightly. Our insistence on worker-ownership, on the right of private property, on the need to de-proletarize the worker, all points which had been emphasized by the popes in their social encyclicals, made many Catholics think we were Communists in disguise, wolves in sheep's clothing.

The house on Mott Street which we occupied for many years began to loom up in our lives as early as 1934, through Mary Lane. She was one of our readers, who lived in a small tenement apartment on the upper West Side on her telegrapher's pension. She was very holy, and when she first saw a copy of the paper with its stories of human misery, she who also saw poverty at firsthand began collecting clothes for us. The first time she came down she stood at the door dramatically and said to me abruptly, "Do you have ecstasies and visions?"

Poor dear, so hungry for mystical experience, even if secondhand, after a long life of faith.

I was taken aback. "Visions of unpaid bills," I said abruptly. Her warmth, her effusiveness, were embarrassing but I soon learned to take them for what they were, an overflowing of an ardent soul, ready to pour itself out in love.

She became our faithful friend. She was lame, half blind, old, yet she stinted herself and gave us five dollars a month of her pension. She had a well-to-do friend named Gertrude Burke, the only daughter of an invalid widowed mother. Gertrude took care of her mother until she died and then began to give her property away to the Church. She went to live at the House of Calvary, a cancer hospital for the poor, which was one of her pet charities. This had been founded by a small group of widows, a "lay institute" according to the terminology of the Church. They were not a religious order. Neither wife nor virgin could belong, though either could help. Miss Burke's uptown house was given to the order of the Good Shepherd. The house on Mott Street had been built by an old uncle back in 1860. His name was Kerri-gan and it was said he had defended old St. Patrick's Cathedral on Mott Street during the Know Nothing riots, standing on the steps with a gun in his hand.

At 115 Mott Street, there was a rear house which had been the original house, and had had a long yard in front; there also was the front house, twice as deep, four rooms on either side of a long narrow hall. The rear house had two rooms on either side with one toilet between them, open fireplaces, a sink and a washtub in each kitchen. In these primitive, unheated, bathless flats, made up of a kitchen and bedroom, the Irish first came to live and then the Italians. Katie, the vegetable woman on the corner, told me her mother had lived in the first floor of the rear building and that St. Francis Cabrini had visited her there. That two-room flat was dark and airless, surrounded as it was by five-story buildings on every side. The sun never reached the rear room whose long win-

dow looked out on another five-story building, one foot away. Yet when the priest came to read the prayers for the dying in that dark room, a ray of sunlight fell on his book so that the candle held by Katie herself was no longer needed!

This entire rear house was empty when I first saw it. Half of the apartments in the front building were also empty. Miss Burke offered us the use of the empty apartments provided we would collect the rents on the rest and be caretakers. It was so much worse a neighborhood than Fifteenth Street that I was appalled at the idea. I asked Rose Clafani, whom I met on the stairs, if she had lived there long and she said stormily, "I was born in this g——d——place!" And that was all I got out of her! I found afterward that she was afraid we were going to buy the building and evict them, and her heart was there. She loved her home.

I turned down the offer then but within a few years I regretted it. I felt it was wrong to take rent for such a place—that it had far better be torn down, or given rent free to the poor. I might easily have expressed myself along these lines, so imprudent am I, so hasty in speech.

When we had found the house on Charles Street too small for us, I telephoned Mary Lane and asked her to intercede for us with Miss Burke, to tell her that we had reconsidered and would be most grateful for the use of the rear house at 125 Mott Street. We would not, however, collect rents on the front building. There was one store empty at that time and we asked for that too. Miss Burke reminded us of the fact that we refused the house when we could have had it—we had not understood her previous offer in this way—and that now she had given the place to the House of Calvary. However, she would ask them if we could use it. The housing crisis was not on us at that time. So, finally we obtained the use of the house and moved in. The other store in front was a speakeasy, run as a dry-goods store. When the tenants moved out we took that as an office. As the apartments became vacant, we rented them for eighteen dollars each. We ended by

having twelve rooms in the front house for women, another four for men, which with those in the rear house made twenty-four rooms for men. Four were used for laundry and storerooms. We did not use the basement because of rats and defective plumbing. The neighbors used one cellar of the rear building for wine-making, and hogsheads of wine were stored there. Once, one of our workers, a former seaman, went down in the cellar and in trying to obtain wine, let much of it escape. We had to pay for it. These apartments and stores, on this narrow, pushcart-lined street, were our home for fourteen years.

The people who worked with us! For the first six months that we published *The Catholic Worker*, we longed for an artist who could illustrate Peter's ideas. An answer to our prayers came in the form of a young girl just out of high school who signed her work, A. de Bethune. Her woodcuts were of worker-saints, St. Peter the fisherman, St. Paul writing in prisons, walking the roads and indoctrinating St. Timothy, St. Crispin the shoemaker, St. Conrad and a host of minor saints, if any saints could be called minor who gave their lives for the faith, whose hearts burned with so single-hearted a fire.

"A picture," Ade reminded us, "was worth ten thousand words." Through a misunderstanding as to her name, we signed her pictures Ade Bethune and so she was called by all of us. She was Belgian and it was only some years later that we knew her title, which her mother continued to use, Baronne de Bethune. The aristocrat and the peasant Peter got on famously. "Our word is tradition," he said happily, and wrote a little essay, "Shouting a Word."

Mrs. Bethune and her daughter illustrated for Peter many ideas besides *noblesse oblige*. He liked to illustrate his ideas by calling attention to people who exemplified them. The Bethune family performed all the works of mercy out of slender resources, earned by the labor of their hands. They had come to this country at the close of World War I. They exemplified voluntary poverty

and manual labor and the love of neighbors to the highest degree.

When Ade built up her studio in Newport where the family moved soon after we met them, she took in apprentices, young girls from different parts of the country who could not have afforded to pay tuition or to support themselves. Two of her apprentices married and went to live on Catholic Worker farms, and are now mothers of large families. My own daughter went to her when she was sixteen and stayed a year, learning the household arts. For to Ade, as to Eric Gill and Peter Maurin, the holy man was the whole man, the man of integrity, who not only tried to change the world, but to live in it as it was.

Whenever I visited Ade I came away with a renewed zest for life. She has such a sense of the sacramentality of life, the goodness of things, a sense that is translated in all her works whether it was illustrating a missal, making stained-glass windows or sewing, cooking or gardening. To do things perfectly was always her aim. Another first principle she always taught was to aim high. "If you are going to put a cross bar on an H," she said, "you have to aim *higher* than your sense of sight tells you."

Dom Vitry, a Benedictine monk from Mared-sous, said this same thing in regard to music, "Aim higher than the note you wish to reach, and you will come down on it."

Ade came to learn from us as well as give us her wood-cuts and we have learned from her. Peter taught her, and she translated his teachings into pictures which we used again and again in the paper.

Once I was attending a steelworker's open-air meeting in Pittsburgh, and when we had distributed the papers we brought, I was amused and delighted to see a huge Slovak or Hungarian worker pointing to the pictures of the working saints and laughing with the joy of discovery.

Ade not only drew for our paper—she allowed her work to be copied by papers all over the world, Catholic

and non-Catholic. We saw reproductions of her wood-cuts in Japanese papers, Portuguese papers, Indian papers, to mention but a few.

Before she was mid-twenty she had designed and with unemployed steelworkers helped build a church in the outskirts of Pittsburgh. She made the stained-glass windows in the Church of the Precious Blood in Brooklyn and recently finished mosaics in a church in the Philippines. In addition to her work of painting, carving, et cetera, she edits a Catholic art quarterly and is a trustee of St. Benedict's farm in Massachusetts, one of the Catholic Worker centers.

On that farm where four families live, one family is made up of seven boys, a father who must go out to work and a mother who has been hospitalized for some years. Ade and her mother have helped this family, as they have helped a number of others in many ways. Not only money and clothes but hard manual labor made up their contributions. Every week a bundle of clothes was sent—and this went on for years—to the Baronne de Bethune in Newport, and she washed, ironed and mended these clothes and sent them back.

It is wonderful to think of and to write of such good works. Hundreds of pairs of socks for men on our bread-lines, funds collected—she was always the great lady with special projects into which she drew many others.

I like to speak of her nobility because in her case that is actually what the word connotes. We emphasize the "Prince" when referring to Kropotkin precisely because he gave up titles and estates to be with the poor. We can recognize too our own country's claim to greatness in that here titles are naturally discarded in an attempt to reach the highest principle of human brotherhood.

The de Bethune family lost much in World War I, but when they came here their philosophy of work was so vital that they made what Eric Gill called a cell of good living.

It is amazing how quickly one can gather together a family. Steve Hergenhan came to us from Union Square.

He was a German carpenter, a skilled workman who after forty years of frugal living had bought himself a plot of ground near Suffern, New York, and had proceeded to build on it, using much of the natural rock in the neighborhood. He built his house on a hillside and used to ski down to the village to get groceries. He did not like cars and would not have one. He thought that cars were driving people to their ruin. Workers bought cars who should buy homes, he said, and they willingly sold themselves into slavery and indebtedness for the sake of the bright new shining cars that speeded along the super highways. Maybe he refused to pay taxes for the roads that accommodated the cars. Maybe he was unable to. At any rate, he lost his little house on the side of the hill and ended up in New York, on a park bench during the day, telling his grievances to all who would listen, and eating and sleeping in the Municipal Lodging House, which then maintained the largest dormitory in the world, seven hundred double-decker beds.

Peter loved the articulate, and after having one of his "round-table discussions" with Steve in Union Square, he invited him to come and stay with us. The technique of the Square then was for two people to have a discussion together with no one interrupting until he was given permission by one of the two speakers, who might cede "the floor" to another.

Both Peter and Steve were agreed on a philosophy of work and the evils of the machine—they followed the writings of the distributists of England and the Southern agrarians in this country. But Steve differed from Peter on works of mercy. He declaimed loudly with St. Paul, "He who does not work, neither let him eat." And no physical or mental disability won his pity. Men were either workers or shirkers. It was the conflict between the worker and scholar that Peter was always talking about. Steve considered himself both a worker and a scholar.

He did not attend church but he used to say scornfully, when he was living with us on our hilltop farm near Easton, Pennsylvania, "If I believed as you do, that

Christ Himself is present there on the altar, nothing in this world would keep me from it." He heard just enough of the discussion about the sacrament of duty and the self-imposed obligation of daily Mass and communion to know which side to take. He was a carper and constant critic and sometimes his language was most immoderate. He aimed to goad, to irritate, and considered it the most effective agitation. Peter never irritated but if Hergenhan became too vituperative he would walk away.

When he came to us, Peter begged him to consent to be used as a foil. Steve was to present the position of the Fascist, the totalitarian, and Peter was to refute him. They discoursed at our nightly meetings, in Union Square and Columbus Circle, and in Harlem, where we had been given the use of another store for the winter. They were invited to speak by Father Scully at a Holy Name meeting, and a gathering of the Knights of Columbus. How they loved these audiences in the simplicity of their hearts. Steve the German, Peter the Frenchman, both with strong accents, with oratory, with facial gesture, with striking pose, put on a show, and when they evoked laughter, they laughed too, delighted at amusing their audience, hoping to arouse them. "I am trying to make the encyclicals click," Peter used to say joyfully, radiant always before an audience. They never felt that they were laughed at. They thought they were being laughed with. Or perhaps they pretended not to see. They were men of poverty, of hard work, of Europe and America; they were men of vision; and they were men, too, with the simplicity of children.

But Hergenhan had bitterness too. The articles he wrote for *The Catholic Worker* about life in the Municipal Lodging House and the quest for bread of the homeless were biting. After the first one appeared, one of the city officials drove up with some companions in a big car and with unctuous flattery praised the work we were doing and asked us why we did not come to them first rather than print such articles about the work of the city.

"I tried to tell you," Hergenhan said. "I tried to tell

you of the graft, the poor food, the treatment we received, the contempt and kicking around we got. But you threatened me with the psychopathic ward. You treated me like a wild beast. You gave me the bum's rush."

Perhaps he looked to them like a dangerous radical, like a wild beast. In the helpless resentment of these men there was a fury which city authorities were afraid would gather into a flood of wrath, once they were gathered into a mob. So among every group in the public square, at the meetings of the unemployed, there were careful guardians of law and order watching, waiting to pounce on these gray men, the color of the lifeless trees and bushes and soil in the squares in winter, who had in them as yet none of the green of hope, the rising sap of faith.

Both Peter and Steve tried to arouse that hope. Both of them were personalists, both were workers. They did not want mass action, or violence. They were lambs in the simplicity of their program. They wanted to see the grass spring up between the cobbles of the city streets. They wanted to see the workers leave the cities with their wives and children and take to the fields, build themselves homes, where they would have room to breathe, to study, to pray, where there would be work for all.

"There is no unemployment on the land," Peter used to shout, and he would be met by jeers. "What about the migrants, the tenant farmers. They either work like slaves for the bosses, or they rot like the men in Tobacco Road."

"Fire the bosses," Peter used to say.

The trouble was that he never filled in the chasms, the valleys, in his leaping from crag to crag of noble thought.

He wanted men to think for themselves. Voluntary poverty, the doing without radios, cars, television sets, cigarettes, movies, cosmetics, all these luxuries, would enable men to buy the necessities. In a village community there would be work, even work in the gardens for the invalids, the children, the old, the crippled, the men and

women who hung around the street corners and the market places, waiting for someone to hire them.

"Personalism and communitarianism" was Peter's cry.

Steve wanted to flog men into action. His impatience was ferocious.

We were put out of the store in Harlem by the owner, who did not agree with our pacifism. As a member of the National Guard, he thought we were subversive. But not before there had been a riot in Harlem which wrecked store fronts, and resulted in some casualties to man and property. During the long night of the rioting, the Negroes who made up the mobs passed us by. "Don't touch this place," Steve and Peter and the old professor who inhabited the store heard them say. "These folks are all right," and the windows smashed all around them and the roaring of the mobs passed down the avenue. It was a fearful night, the men said, and it but reinforced their conviction of the futility of violence.

To build a new society within the shell of the old! It was the old I.W.W. slogan.

Soon we rented a twelve-room house with a big attic, in Huguenot, Staten Island, right on the water, and there Steve planted a garden which was a model to all who came to participate in week-end conferences. Groups of young people came and speakers from Columbia University, from the Catholic University, from colleges in the Midwest, for these retreats and colloquiums. But as usual in groups working together, they went off on tangents and spent hours discussing rubrics and whether or not to say "compline" in English or Latin and there was discussion too of machines and the land, organization and organism, the corporative order and the corporative state and the rising tide of facism and nazism.

They all talked, and Steve talked with the best of them, but they were young and he was past fifty; they were young students, second- or third-generation Italian, German, French, Irish, and Peter and Steve were first generation. They listened to Peter because he never turned on them. Steve hated their avoidance of work,

and after a good deal of recrimination turned from them to cultivate his garden.

The young fellows picketed the German consulate in protest against nazism; they gave out literature at the docking of the *Bremen* and became involved in a riot when some Communists who called themselves Catholic workers tore down the swastika from the ship and were arrested. But Hergenhan just vented his scorn on youth in general and brought in great baskets of Swiss chard, tomatoes, beans and squash for us to admire and eat. It choked him to see the young people eat them. He wanted disciples who would listen to him and work with him.

The next year we received a letter from a Baltimore schoolteacher who wished to invest in community. She offered us a thousand dollars provided we would build her a house and deed her three acres of the farm near Easton, Pennsylvania, to be purchased with her down payment. She would provide secondhand materials for the house.

We tried to dissuade her from coming to us, telling her of our dissensions, warning her she would be disappointed, but she insisted on contributing the money. She was disappointed of course, but when she sold her little house some ten years later, she got out of it a great deal more than she put into it. That didn't prevent her from writing to the Archbishop of Baltimore telling him that she had been lured to contribute to our farming commune by promises of community, which promises had proved false.

Steve always insisted that he had built her house single-handed. But Peter, and John and Paul Cort helped clean secondhand brick, pull nails out of the secondhand lumber, cart water up the hill from the spring and cisterns and dig the cellar, and there were many others who contributed many man-hours of labor. Of course much discussion went on with the building and digging. Hergenhan lived in a little shanty on the edge of the woods and came down to the farmhouse for his meals. He

worked with great satisfaction on the house for two years. He was starting off the Catholic Workers with their first farming commune. He was showing them how to work, how to build, and he had great satisfaction in his toil. It was a spot of unutterable beauty looking down over the Delaware and the cultivated fields of New Jersey. Two and a half miles away at the foot of the hills were the twin cities of Easton and Philipsburg, one on either side of the river. Easton is a railroad center and a place of small factories, an old town with many historic buildings, and a college town, with Lafayette College perched upon a hill. There were Syrian, Lithuanian, German, Italian and Irish churches, and we had all these nationalities among us too.

Hergenhan built his house and then returned to the city to indoctrinate. He got tired of being considered the worker, and wanted to be a scholar for a time. But his bitterness had increased. In protest against our policies, specifically our works of mercy, he went to Camp La Guardia, a farm colony for homeless men run by the city. He wanted efficient and able-bodied workers building up village communities. We were clogged up with too much deadwood, with sluggish drones—it was the same old argument again, only this time it was a true worker and not just a young intellectual who was arguing the point.

He became ill and returned to us at Mott Street. We were his family after all. He was by then fifty-six. When he was examined the doctors discovered cancer, and after an operation he was taken to St. Rose's Cancer Hospital on the East Side, to die.

"Abandon hope all ye who enter here," he cried out when I came to visit him. He had not known of his cancer—they had talked of an intestinal obstruction at the hospital where the operation was performed—and when he was brought to St. Rose's he saw written over the door, *Home of the Cancerous Poor*.

His was a little room on the first floor; all day one could look into the garden and past that to the river

where tugs and tankers steamed up and down the tidal river and clouds floated over the low shore of Brooklyn. The world was beautiful and he did not want to die. There was so much work he wanted to do, so small a part he had been allowed to play.

Peter and I used to go to see him every day. By that time I had just made what came to be known as our retreat and was filled with enthusiasm and ready to talk to anyone who would listen on the implications of the Christian life—and Steve always loved to converse, provided one gave him a chance to get in his share of the conversation.

I went to St. Rose's each day with my notes, and read them to him. He gradually became happy and reconciled. He had said, "There is so much I wanted to do." And I told him how Father John Hugo had talked of work, "that physical work was hard, mental work harder, and spiritual work was the hardest of all." And I pointed out that he was now doing the spiritual work of his life, lying there suffering, enduring, sowing all his own desires, in order to reap them in heaven. He began to realize that he had to die in order to live, that the door would open, that there was a glorious vista before him, "that all things were his."

"All things are yours," St. Paul wrote, "whether it be Paul or Apollo or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come. For all are yours. And you are Christ's. And Christ is God's."

I read Bede Jarrett's *No Abiding City* to him, and some of Father Faber's conferences on death, and he enjoyed them all. They offered him the richness of thought that he craved, and when the Sister who cared for him asked him if he did not want Baptism, he shouted wholeheartedly, "Yes!"

Peter and I were his sponsors, and to me it was a miracle of God's grace that the lack of dignity with which the Sacrament was conferred did not affront Steve, who was always hypercritical. He was baptized with speed and his confession listened to. He received Viaticum. I

remember his anointing most vividly. Three other men were lined up on the bed at the same time, sitting there like gaunt old crows, their simple solemn faces lifted expectantly, childlike, watching every move of the priest, as he anointed their eyes, nose, mouth, ears, their claw-like hands stretched out to receive the holy oil, their feet with horny toes to which the priest bent with swift indifference.

He finished the job, he performed the outward signs, he recited the Latin prayers in a garbled monotone in the back of his throat, and despite the lack of grace in the human sense, Grace was there, souls were strengthened, hearts were lifted.

Ritual, how could we do without it! Though it may seem to be gibberish and irreverence, though the Mass is offered up in such haste that the sacred sentence, "hoc est corpus meus" was abbreviated into "hocus-pocus" by the bitter protestor and has come down into our language meaning trickery, nevertheless there is a sureness and a conviction there. And just as a husband may embrace his wife casually as he leaves for work in the morning, and kiss her absent-mindedly in his comings and goings, still that kiss on occasion turns to rapture, a burning fire of tenderness and love. And with this to stay her she demands the "ritual" of affection shown. The little altar boy kissing the cruet of water as he hands it to the priest is performing a rite. We have too little ritual in our lives.

Steve was baptized and anointed but he did not rally. Daily he became weaker and weaker and sometimes when I came I found him groaning with pain. Earlier at Roosevelt Hospital they had given him a brown-paper bag to blow into when he had an attack of pain. He would go through this ridiculous gesture as though he were going to break the bag explosively, as children do, but it was a desperate device like a woman's pulling on a roped sheet attached to the foot of the bed in the agonies of childbirth. Perhaps the intensity of pain and the intensity of pleasure are both somehow shameful because we so lose control, so lose ourselves, that we are no longer creatures of free will, but in the control of our blind

flesh. "Who will deliver me from the body of this death?"

Steve died suddenly one morning, and there was no one with him. We found in his papers afterward notations which indicated his bitterness at not being more used, as writer, speaker, teacher. That has been the lament of so many who have died with us. Just as they are beginning to open their eyes to the glory and the potentialities of life their life is cut short as a weaver's thread. They were like the grass of the field. "The spaces of this life, set over against eternity, are most brief and poor," one of the desert Fathers said. It is part of the long loneliness.

There was the French professor who could speak many languages, and who was inventing a universal language. He had been a drug addict and had been cured. Now he had begun to drink, but it was only occasionally. He loved to go on nature walks, up along the Palisades and through Bear Mountain Park, with others who came together by correspondence. This was a part of his life we knew little about. He liked to translate articles for us, not for publication, but for our information. He would write them out in notebooks in a small fine hand, but when he gave them in, it was always with the expectation of money for something to drink. Since we passed many a day with little or no money on hand, and often had to run up gigantic grocery bills (our bill has gone as high as \$6,000) he did not often get the fifty cents or a dollar he was expecting. Fifty cents was enough to start him off because he could buy a pint of wine on the Bowery for thirty-five cents.

One of our readers in Burlington, Vermont, a woman doctor who admired Peter Maurin very much, once told him that he could charge books to her account at Brentano's. For a while Peter had a field day. He was buying books for all his friends, even ordering them from England and from France. The professor found a way to increase his pay by asking Peter for dictionaries, German, Italian, French, Latin, Greek, et cetera. The friend in Burlington probably thought we were becoming impossibly intellectual, but she did not protest until bills came

in for three French dictionaries. She wrote to us then saying that she could understand the need for one, but not for three. The professor had been selling them all. After that Peter limited his book-buying to one volume a week, and that for himself. It was a luxury, but also a necessity. It was the one luxury he enjoyed, and he shared it with young students who could not afford books and with others whom he tried to induce to read.

But as one young man who shared a room with Peter said, "Peter is always asking you to read his list of essential books, but when you settle down for a long evening of reading, he finds that an opportunity to talk." He liked catching you alone, serious and ready to think. He thought the role of teacher more effective than that of author.

There were these friends of Peter, some of them writing for the paper from the depths of their own experience. There were Margaret and Charlie and Francis who also wrote for the paper—Margaret, the Lithuanian girl, and Charlie, the convert Jew who used to sell gardenias on street corners, and Francis, who had been in Sing Sing for robbery with a Brooklyn gang. We knew many youths who had been in jail for robbery. The Italians love to gamble and the stakes often reach into the thousands. Families have to mortgage homes, take up collections among themselves to pay off. If other payment fails the youths are given "jobs" to do, and they find themselves part of a gang. They have seen the penalty for nonpayment of gambling debts in the slums in many a gang killing. One time, John Cort coming home from Mass saw a man lying dead in the center of the street, while the car from which the shooting was done sped away. John took the number of the license plates, though it was as much as his life was worth, but nothing ever came of this that we knew of. Women rushing out from tenements all around feared for their own. On this occasion, the young girl who lived in our house said to me bitterly, "There isn't a house on this block that hasn't got a son in Sing Sing."

Many college students and graduates came to live with us and to help us. It was usually the war or marriage which caused them to leave, or other opportunities for interesting work. But they always left with what they called their positions, their basic principles, firmly fixed in their minds, their faith confirmed, their lives in a way integrated. They did not go away to make a material success. And certainly there were many happy marriages. At *The Catholic Worker* there is always work for people to do. Peter glorified manual labor and taught what he liked to call his philosophy of labor. Ed Marciniak, one of the Chicago *Catholic Worker* group began a Labor weekly called *Work*. Ade Bethune wrote a pamphlet *Work*, the size of a small book, which has run through many editions. Father Rembert Sorg, the Benedictine from St. Procopius Abbey in Chicago, had written a book called *Towards a Theology of Manual Labor* which has much in it from the early Fathers of the Church. This emphasis on the manual work of the world, which will go on no matter how many machines we may have to lighten labor, made students eager to help with hauling, cleaning, moving, cooking and washing, all the multitude of household tasks that come up about a hospice.

In the early days, every afternoon saw visitors engaged in the work of moving evicted families. Now there are only occasional apartments for rent and occasional moving, but Helen Adler, one of the girls working with us, spent a number of months hunting apartments for women and children who were in the Municipal Lodging House. Charles McCormick, another of our staff, not only moved them but collected furniture from all over Greater New York, to supplement our own old furniture and also to help furnish the homes of the poor. He is kept busy driving to pick up food at the Essex Market, fish at the Fulton Market, or transporting supplies and our home-baked bread from our Staten Island farm to the city.

Selling the paper in front of Macy's or St. Francis'

Church, or in Times Square or in front of Grand Central Station made one indeed look the fool. It was more natural to sell it along Fourteenth Street or Union Square where people were always selling or giving out literature. Once when we distributed along the water front to longshoremen, publicizing a meeting for longshoremen and seamen, one of them said, "They're always poking stuff at us, papers, posters, leaflets; first it's the Communists and then it's the Jehovah's Witnesses, and now it's the Catholics."

It was a difficult job, giving out literature, or selling the paper on the streets, but when one got used to it there was joy and freedom in it too, and the camaraderie of those who live on the streets and talk to each other freely. We learned their point of view. We were constantly confronted with the fact that on the one hand our daily papers, radio commentators and now television were shaping the minds of the people, and yet they were still responsive to basic and simple religious truths. They were attached to the good; they were hard-working, struggling human beings living for the day, and afraid of the unknown.

Once that sense of fear of the unknown was overcome, brotherly love would evoke brother love, and mutual love would overcome fear and hatred.

The Communists recognized the power of the press, and also that the simple maxim "go to the people" meant literally going to them. The first time Trotsky was arrested it was for distributing literature at factory gates. When some of our friends were arrested in Chicago at stockyards during an organizational drive, we felt truly revolutionary and effective since organized industry, through the hands of the law which they controlled, had reached out to stop us.

It is easy enough to write and publish a paper and mail it out with the help of volunteers to the four corners of the earth. But it becomes an actual, living thing when you get out on the street corners with the word, as St. Paul did in the early days of Christianity.

LABOR

□ *The Catholic Worker*, as the name implied, was directed to the worker, but we used the word in its broadest sense, meaning those who worked with hand or brain, those who did physical, mental or spiritual work. But we thought primarily of the poor, the dispossessed, the exploited.

Every one of us who was attracted to the poor had a sense of guilt, of responsibility, a feeling that in some way we were living on the labor of others. The fact that we were born in a certain environment, were enabled to go to school, were endowed with the ability to compete with others and hold our own, that we had few physical disabilities—all these things marked us as the privileged in a way. We felt a respect for the poor and destitute as those nearest to God, as those chosen by Christ for His compassion. Christ lived among men. The great mystery of the Incarnation, which meant that God became man that man might become God, was a joy that made us want to kiss the earth in worship, because His feet once trod that same earth. It was a mystery that we as Catholics accepted, but there were also the facts of Christ's life, that He was born in a stable, that He did not come to be a temporal King, that He worked with His hands, spent the first years of His life in exile, and the rest of His early manhood in a crude carpenter shop in Nazareth. He fulfilled His religious duties in the synagogue and the temple. He trod the roads in His public life and the first men He called were fishermen, small owners of boats and nets. He was familiar with the migrant worker and the proletariat, and some of His parables dealt with them. He spoke of the living wage, not equal pay for equal work,

in the parable of those who came at the first and the eleventh hour.

He died between two thieves because He would not be made an earthly King. He lived in an occupied country for thirty years without starting an underground movement or trying to get out from under a foreign power. His teaching transcended all the wisdom of the scribes and pharisees, and taught us the most effective means of living in this world while preparing for the next. And He directed His sublime words to the poorest of the poor, to the people who thronged the towns and followed after John the Baptist, who hung around, sick and poverty-stricken at the doors of rich men.

He had set us an example and the poor and destitute were the ones we wished to reach. The poor were the ones who had jobs of a sort, organized or unorganized, and those who were unemployed or on work-relief projects. The destitute were the men and women who came to us in the breadlines and we could do little with them but give what we had of food and clothing. Sin, sickness and death accounted for much of human misery. But aside from this, we did not feel that Christ meant we should remain silent in the face of injustice and accept it even though He said, "The poor ye shall always have with you."

In the first issue of the paper we dealt with Negro labor on the levees in the South, exploited as cheap labor by the War Department. We wrote of women and children in industry and the spread of unemployment. The second issue carried a story of a farmers' strike in the Midwest and the condition of restaurant workers in cities. In the third issue there were stories of textile strikes and child labor in that industry; the next month coal and milk strikes. In the sixth issue of the paper we were already combatting anti-Semitism. From then on, although we wanted to make our small eight-page tabloid a local paper, that is, covering the American scene, we could not ignore the issues abroad. They had their repercussions at home. We could not write about these issues

without being drawn out on the streets on picket lines, and we found ourselves in 1935 with the Communists picketing the German consulate at the Battery.

It was not the first time we seemed to be collaborators. During the Ohrbach Department Store strike the year before I ran into old friends from the Communist group, but I felt then, and do now, that the fact that Communists made issue of Negro exploitation and labor trouble was no reason why we should stay out of the situation. "The truth is the truth," writes St. Thomas, "and proceeds from the Holy Ghost, no matter from whose lips it comes."

There was mass picketing every Saturday afternoon during the Ohrbach strike, and every Saturday the police drove up with patrol wagons and loaded the pickets into them with their banners and took them to jail. When we entered the dispute with our slogans drawn from the writings of the popes regarding the condition of labor, the police around Union Square were taken aback and did not know what to do. It was as though they were arresting the Holy Father himself, one of them said, were they to load our pickets and their signs into their patrol wagons. The police contented themselves with giving us all injunctions. One seminarian who stood on the side lines and cheered was given an injunction too, which he cherished as a souvenir.

Our readers helped us when they responded to our call not to trade with a store which paid poor wages and forced workers to labor long hours, and we helped defeat the injunction, one of the usual weapons used by employers to defeat picketing, which was handed down against the strikers. Now there is the Taft-Hartley law.

At that time one of the big Catholic high schools in the city each month received a bundle of three thousand copies of our paper for their students. I had spoken there of the work for the poor and some of the students had worked with us. When we picketed the Mexican consulate to protest the religious persecution which was revived in 1934, the students came and joined us more than

two thousand strong. We had set out, half a dozen of us, and, although we had printed an invitation in the paper, we did not expect such a hearty response. The police again were stunned at this demonstration, having met only with Communists in such mass demonstrations before. The students sang, marched and rejoiced in the fact that their pictures appeared on the front page of the *Daily News* the next morning.

Among other readers who joined us that day was a young mate on a Standard Oil tanker who said he first read our paper while sailing in the Gulf. From then on he visited the office between trips and contributed half his salary to the work. Other picketers were Margaret, our cook, and her baby, and my daughter. Most belligerent was a young woman who had been sent to us from a hospital after an unsuccessful operation for tumor on the brain. She was not too well informed as to issues and principles, and when one of the passers-by asked her what the picketing was about, she answered tartly, "None of your business."

She was one of those who liked to get out on the streets and sell the paper with Big Dan and a few others. There were many protests from the young intellectuals that these should seem to the public to represent the work. But they were certainly a part of it—"they belonged"—and they felt it and were fiercely loyal, though often they could make no answer for the faith that was in them.

The picketing of the Mexican consulate went well with the good Sisters who taught in a great Catholic high school, but when the students wanted to go on a picket line in a strike for the unionization of workers and better wages and hours, and were logical enough to extend their sympathy by boycotting the National Biscuit Company products and to inform their family grocers and delicatessens of this intention, then it was time for a stop. We were politely told that individuals could take the paper, but that the bundle order of three thousand must be can-

celed. There were too many people protesting against our activities with the students.

(On another occasion when I spoke to a high school group in Philadelphia, before I even returned to New York, a cancellation came in. "You must have done a good job down there," our circulation manager said grimly. "They used to take two thousand copies and now they've dropped them.")

Other readers who owned stock in N.B.C. sold their shares and informed the corporation. These acts helped settle the strike. The most spectacular help we gave in a strike was during the formation of the National Maritime Union. In May, 1936, the men appealed to us for help in housing and feeding some of the strikers, who came off the ships with Joe Curran in a spontaneous strike against not only the shipowners but also the old union leaders.

We had then just moved St. Joseph's house to 115 Mott Street and felt that we had plenty of room. Everyone camped out for a time while seamen occupied the rooms which they made into dormitories. There were about fifty of them altogether during the course of the next month or so, and a number of them became friends of the work.

There were O'Toole, a cook on the United States Lines, and Mike, a Portuguese engineer who carried copies of *The Catholic Worker* to Spain when he shipped out later, bringing us back copies of papers and magazines from Barcelona. This same friend brought us a bag full of earth from Mount Carmel after his ship had touched at the Holy Land. Once he asked me what I wanted from India, and I told him the kind of a spindle which Gandhi had sent to Chiang Kai-shek, as a gift and a warning, perhaps against United States industrialism. He and a shipmate searched in several Indian ports for what I wanted and finally found three spindles in Karachi which they brought to me. One was a metal hand spinner shaped like those shown in old pictures which could be carried about in a little box; the other two were most pe-

culiar contraptions, one of them looking like a portable phonograph.

The seamen came and went and most of them we never saw again, but three remained for years and joined in our work. That first strike was called off, but in the fall, after the men built up their organization, the strike call went out again. For the duration of the strike we rented a store on Tenth Avenue and used it as a reading room and soup kitchen where no soup was served, but coffee and peanut butter and apple butter sandwiches. The men came in from picket lines and helped themselves to what they needed. They read, they talked, and they had time to think. Charlie O'Rourke, John Cort, Bill Callahan and a number of seamen kept the place open all day and most of the night. There was never any disorder; there were no maneuverings, no caucuses, no seeking of influence or power; it was simply a gesture of help, the disinterested help of brothers, inspired in great part by our tanker friend, Jim McGovern, who had written an article for the paper telling how he had been treated as a seaman in Russia and the kind of treatment these same men got here.

Jim was a college graduate, had fallen away from his early faith but regained it by reading Claudel. He was so painfully shy that he was no good at all in contacts with the rank and file. He went to sea because he loved it; he loved the ship he served and the responsibility it entailed. Perhaps there was much of romance and youth in his attitude. He wrote to us of the clubs in the Russian port, and how the men were treated as men, capable of appreciating lectures, concerts, dances and meetings with student groups. In this country, he said, the seamen were treated as the scum of the earth; port towns and the port districts in these towns were slums and water-front streets made up of taverns and pawnshops and houses of prostitution. He felt that the Russians treated their American comrades as though they were creatures of body and soul, made in the image and likeness of God (though atheism was an integral part of Marxism) and

here in our professedly Christian country they were treated like beasts, and often became beasts because of this attitude.

Our headquarters were a tribute to the seaman's dignity as a man free to form association with his fellows, to have some share in the management of the enterprise in which he was engaged.

On another occasion, when the Borden Milk Company attempted to force a company union on their workers, *The Catholic Worker* took up their cause, called public attention to the use of gangsters and thugs to intimidate the drivers and urged our readers to boycott the company's products while unfair conditions prevailed. As a result of the story the company attacked *The Catholic Worker* in paid advertisements in the Brooklyn *Tablet* and the *Catholic News*.

Many times we have been asked why we spoke of *Catholic* workers, and so named the paper. Of course it was not only because we who were in charge of the work, who edited the paper, were all Catholics, but also because we wished to influence Catholics. They were our own, and we reacted sharply to the accusation that when it came to private morality the Catholics shone but when it came to social and political morality, they were often conscienceless. Also Catholics were the poor, and most of them had little ambition or hope of bettering their condition to the extent of achieving ownership of home or business, or further education for their children. They accepted things as they were with humility and looked for a better life to come. They thought, in other words, that God meant it to be so.

At the beginning of the organizing drive of the Committee (now the Congress) for Industrial Organization, I went to Pittsburgh to write about the work in the steel districts. Mary Heaton Vorse was there at the time and we stayed at Hotel Pitt together in the cheapest room available, at a dollar and a half a day. It was before we had the house of hospitality in Pittsburgh which now stands on the top of a hill in the Negro district. A student

reader of the paper drove us around to all the little towns, talking of his soul, much to Mary's distress; she was especially distracted when he told of practicing penances on our Easton farm by going out at night and rolling in some brambles. He had no interest in the struggles of the workers—it was the spiritual side of our work which appealed to him—and he was driving us through all the complicated districts on either side of rivers not so much to help us, as to help himself. He wanted to talk to us about his problems. There was not the quiet and peace on such trips to make such talk very fruitful.

There had been the big strike in 1919 led by William Z. Foster, which Mary had covered, and she knew some of the old priests who had helped the people by turning the basements of their churches into relief centers. We went to see them, and we attended open-air meetings along the Monongahela and the Allegheny and Ohio rivers, where we distributed papers.

On that visit Bishop Hugh Boyle said to me, "You can go into all the parishes in the diocese with my blessing, but half the pastors will throw you out." He meant that they did not have that social consciousness which I was seeking among Catholics and that they felt all organizations of workers were dominated by Communists and were a danger to be avoided.

Later in the big steel strikes in Chicago and Cleveland, when "Little Steel" fought it out with the workers, there was tragedy on the picket lines. In what came to be called the Memorial Day massacre, police shot down hundreds out on the praries in front of the Republic Steel plants in South Chicago. Ten men died, and others were disabled for life. I had just visited their soup kitchens and strike headquarters; in addition to recognizing that the majority of the workers were Catholics, I also recognized an old friend, Elizabeth, the wife of Jack Johnstone, one of the Communist party leaders in this country. Elizabeth and Jack had brought me roast chicken and ginger ale one night as I lay sick with influenza in New York, and Elizabeth had taken care of Tamar for me so

that I could go to Mass, and I had taken care of her young son. Elizabeth, whom I had last seen in New York, was there to write a pamphlet on "Women in Steel," a call to the wives and mothers to help their men organize. Her husband had been organizing in India, and they were accustomed to long separations during which both of them worked for the party. Elizabeth used to tease me by saying that it was due to me that she had become a member of the party and had met Jack, because I had obtained a job for her with the Anti-Imperialist League, where I was working at the time.

Elizabeth in Chicago, Jack in India—these wives of Communists, dedicated to revolution as Rayna was! Rayna's husband had worked in the Philippines while she was in Hankow. They went where they were sent, had a sense of their world mission and accepted any hardship that it entailed. If I could only arouse Catholics to such zeal, with the spiritual weapons at their disposal, I thought! If they could only be induced to accept voluntary poverty as a principle, so that they would not fear the risk of losing job, of losing life itself. Organizing sometimes meant just that.

It was not only the Communists, however, who had this courage. One winter I had a speaking engagement in Kansas and my expenses were paid, which fact enabled me to go to Memphis and Arkansas to visit the Tenant Farmers' Union, which was then and is still headed by a Christian Socialist group. The headquarters were a few rooms in Memphis, where the organizers often slept on the floor because there was no money for rent other than that of the offices. Those days I spent with them I lived on sandwiches and coffee because there was no money to spend on regular meals either. We needed to save money for gas to take us around to the centers where dispossessed sharecroppers and tenant farmers were also camping out, homeless, in railroad stations, schools and churches. They were being evicted wholesale because of the purchase of huge tracts of land by northern insurance agencies. The picture has been shown in *Tobacco Road*,

In Dubious Battle and *Grapes of Wrath*—pictures of such desolation and poverty and in the latter case of such courage that my heart was lifted again to hope and love and admiration that human beings could endure so much and yet have courage to go on and keep their vision of a more human life.

During that trip I saw men, women and children herded into little churches and wayside stations, camped out in tents, their household goods heaped about them, not one settlement but many—farmers with no land to farm, housewives with no homes. They tried with desperate hope to hold onto a pig or some chickens, bags of seed, some little beginnings of a new hold on life. It was a bitter winter and frame houses there are not built to withstand the cold as they are in the north. The people just endure it because the winter is short—accept it as part of the suffering of life.

I saw children ill, one old man dead in bed and not yet buried, mothers weeping with hunger and cold. I saw bullet holes in the frame churches, and their benches and pulpit smashed up and windows broken. Men had been kidnapped and beaten; men had been shot and wounded. The month after I left, one of the organizers was killed by a member of a masked band of vigilantes who were fighting the Tenant Farmers' Union.

There was so little one could do—empty one's pockets, give what one had, live on sandwiches with the organizers, and write, write to arouse the public conscience. I telegraphed Eleanor Roosevelt and she responded at once with an appeal to the governor for an investigation. The papers were full of the effrontery of a northern Catholic social worker, as they called me, who dared to pay a four-day visit and pass judgment on the economic situation of the state. The governor visited some of the encampments, and sarcastic remarks were made in some of the newspaper accounts about the pigs and chickens. "If they are starving, let them eat their stock," they wrote.

I spoke to meetings of the unemployed in California, to migrant workers, tenant farmers, steelworkers, stock-

yard workers, auto workers. The factory workers were the aristocrats of labor. Yet what a struggle they had!

There was that migrant worker I picked up when I drove in a borrowed car down through the long valley in California, writing about government aid to the agricultural workers. "Nothing I love so much as jest to get out in a field and chop cotton," he said wistfully.

There was that old Negro living in a little shack in Alabama where the rain fell through on the rags that covered him at night. While I talked to him a little boy ran up and gave him a bone and some pieces of corn-bread; the old man was so excited talking to me and the priest who was with me that he dropped the bone on the ground and a hound dog started licking it. The little boy stood by him, pulling at his sleeve and crying. It was his dinner too, his only dinner, and it was being devoured by a dog. If the old man had more, the children would have less. And there was so little.

There was that little girl in Harrisburg, and another in Detroit, sent out by their parents to prostitute themselves on the street. While I talked to the family in Harrisburg, all of whom lived in one room, the little girl sat reading a tattered book, *Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall*.

There was Paul St. Marie, who was president of the first Ford local, a tool and die maker, with a wife and eight children. He suffered from unemployment, from discrimination when he was hired. He worked the graveyard shift from twelve to eight, walked a mile from gate to plant, and worked in the cold on stone floors. He fell ill with rheumatic fever at the age of forty-five and died. He knew poverty and insecurity and living on relief—he and his wife were heroic figures in the labor movement, thinking of their fellows more than of themselves. Paul took me around the auto plants and showed me what the assembly line meant. I met the men who were beaten to a pulp when they tried to distribute literature at plant gates, and I saw the unemployed who had fire hoses turned on them during an icy winter when they hung around the gates of the Ford plant looking for work.

"How close are you to the worker?" Pitirim Sorokin asked me when I was talking with him at Harvard. He himself was the son of a peasant woman and a migrant worker and was imprisoned three times under the Czars and three times under the Soviets. He too had suffered exile in the forests, hunger and imprisonment; he had lived under the sentence of death and was, through some miracle, and probably because of his doctrine of love in human behavior, allowed to go abroad. He had a right to ask such a question and it was a pertinent one.

Going around and seeing such sights is not enough. To help the organizers, to give what you have for relief, to pledge yourself to voluntary poverty for life so that you can share with your brothers is not enough. One must live with them, share with them their suffering too. Give up one's privacy, and mental and spiritual comforts as well as physical.

Our Detroit house of hospitality for women is named for St. Martha. We are always taking care of migrant families in that house, southern families who are lured to the North because they hear of the high wages paid. It is a house of eight large rooms, and each of the bedrooms has housed a family with children, but the congestion has meant that the husbands had to go to the men's house of hospitality named for St. Francis. Sometimes the families overflow into a front parlor and living room downstairs. The colored take care of the white children, and the white the colored, while the parents hunt for homes and jobs. Such an extreme of destitution makes all men brothers.

Yes, we have lived with the poor, with the workers, and we know them not just from the streets, or in mass meetings, but from years of living in the slums, in tenements, in our hospices in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, New York, Rochester, Boston, Worcester, Buffalo, Troy, Detroit, Cleveland, Toledo, Akron, St. Louis, Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, even down into Houma, Louisiana where Father Je-

rome Drolet worked with Negroes and whites, with shrimp shellers, fishermen, longshoremen and seamen.

Just as the Church has gone out through its missionaries into the most obscure towns and villages, we have gone too. Sometimes our contacts have been through the Church and sometimes through readers of our paper, through union organizers or those who needed to be organized.

We have lived with the unemployed, the sick, the unemployables. The contrast between the worker who is organized and has his union, the fellowship of his own trade to give him strength, and those who have no organization and come in to us on a breadline is pitiable.

They are stripped then, not only of all earthly goods, but of spiritual goods, their sense of human dignity. When they are forced into line at municipal lodging houses, in clinics, in our houses of hospitality, they are then the truly destitute. Over and over again in our work, many young men and women who come as volunteers have not been able to endure it and have gone away. To think that we are forced by our own lack of room, our lack of funds, to perpetuate this shame, is heartbreaking.

"Is this what you meant by houses of hospitality," I asked Peter.

"At least it will arouse the conscience," he said.

Many left the work because they could see no use in this gesture of feeding the poor, and because of their own shame. But enduring this shame is part of our penance.

"All men are brothers." How often we hear this refrain, the rallying call that strikes a response in every human heart. These are the words of Christ, "Call no man master, for ye are all brothers." It is a revolutionary call which has even been put to music. The last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony has that great refrain—"All men are brothers." Going to the people is the purest and best act in Christian tradition and revolutionary tradition and is the beginning of world brotherhood.

Never to be severed from the people, to set out always from the point of view of serving the people, not serving the interests of a small group or oneself. "To believe in the infinite creative power of the people," Mao Tse-tung, the secretary of the Communist party in China, wrote with religious fervor. And he said again in 1943, "The maxim 'three common men will make a genius' tells us that there is great creative power among the people and that there are thousands and thousands of geniuses among them. There are geniuses in every village, every city." It is almost another way of saying that we must and will find Christ in each and every man, when we look on them as brothers.

At a group meeting in New York, part of the Third Hour movement, made up of Catholics, Russian Orthodox, and Protestants of all denominations, a Socialist said to me that the gesture of going to the people was futile and that it had been tried in Russia and failed. We had a long discussion on the validity of such efforts to achieve brotherhood, and I kept repeating that the Christian point of view was to keep in mind the failure of the Cross. Then thinking I might be talking to someone with a Jewish background, I spoke of the natural order itself, how the seed must fall into the ground and die in order to bear fruit. In the labor movement every strike is considered a failure, a loss of wages and man power, and no one is ever convinced that understanding between employer and worker is any clearer or that gains have been made on either side; and yet in the long history of labor, certainly there has been a slow and steady bettering of conditions. Women no longer go down into the mines, little children are not fed into the mills. In the long view the efforts of the workers have achieved much.

At the close of the evening, I learned that I had been talking to Alexander Kerensky, one of the greatest failures in history.

My trips around the country were usually to visit our houses of hospitality, which were springing up every-

where, and also to speak at schools. I took advantage of these trips to cover strikes and the new organizational drive of the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Father James G. Keller, head of the Christopher Movement, called me one day and said that Archbishop McNicholas would like to talk to me, so I took a train to Cincinnati. Usually I travel by bus in order to economize. But this time the Archbishop sent a ticket and I traveled comfortably. I spent the day with him and with several other bishops of the Midwest, discussing the condition of the unemployed and the strikes that were going on in the auto plants. We were served magnificently at the bishops' table but the Archbishop himself dined modestly on a few vegetables and milk. I could not help thinking, of course, of our breadlines, and our cramped quarters. It is not only the Archbishop's palace which is a contrast, but every rectory in our big cities, and even in country sections. Only in the mission fields is the rectory as poor as the homes of the workers round about. One can understand the idea of a functional society and the needs of doctors for cars and telephones and of the lawyer and teacher for books and space, but the ordinary family has need of space too for his little church which is his family.

For Christ Himself, housed in the tabernacles in the Church no magnificence is too great, but for the priest who serves Christ, and for the priesthood of the laity, no such magnificence, in the face of the hunger and homelessness of the world, can be understood.

And yet I do know too that if any bishop or archbishop started to take the poor into his palace, or moved out of his palace to live with the poor, he would be considered mad. And he would suffer the fate of the fool.

Bishops and priests may long to make that gesture, but their own humility no doubt restrains them. Some day may God put His hand upon them so unmistakably that they know they are called to this gesture, to this madness. We begin to see a little of it in Archbishop Stepinac,

who told C. L. Sulzberger of the *New York Times* that he would not be other than where he was, in a prison cell, doing penance for the Church.

"The Church is the Cross on which Christ was crucified, and who can separate Christ from His Cross," Guardini has written.

On that happy occasion when I enjoyed the day with the Archbishop, who, like so many others, lived in poverty in the midst of wealth, Father Keller and I listened to him read a pastoral letter he had just written. It was about the condition of capital and labor, and I felt it was a noble piece of writing. But Father Keller thought the Archbishop was a trifle harsh to the rich.

That night when I discussed going to Detroit to cover the situation of the sit-down strikers in the Flint auto plants, the Archbishop urged me to go to them, to write about them. He had one of his priests reserve and pay for a Pullman berth for me so that I would be fresh the next day for my work.

It was a friendly and a happy day of talk about the needs of the workers and the poor. It made me unhappy later when the Archbishop became so uneasy about *The Catholic Worker's* editorial position on the Spanish Civil War that he asked pastors in his diocese to discontinue getting it for their churches or schools, though he did not suggest that they cease taking it themselves.

On another occasion he issued a call in one of his public statements, for a mighty army of conscientious objectors if we embarked upon a war with Russia as an ally. Those of our associates around the country who swelled the ranks of the Catholic conscientious objectors looked ruefully on the anything-but-mighty army. They also felt that they were conscientious objectors for the same reason that they opposed the war in Spain, or class war or race war or imperialist war, not because Russia was our ally.

The Archbishop gave us three hundred dollars as a contribution toward our camp for conscientious objectors, and we deeply appreciated this first gesture of ec-

clesiastical friendship in our hitherto unheard-of position. Before he died he sent us his blessing again.

But I am trying to write about the bishops in connection with the labor movement. Archbishop Schrembs of Cleveland was always friendly when I visited him at those times I was invited to speak at congress and social-action meetings. I visited strike headquarters during the Little Steel strike and talked with the men. They were worn with the protracted conflict and worried about losing the homes they had managed to buy after years of saving, and the food and clothing needed for their children if they lost both strike and job as had happened on other occasions in the past. The next day when I visited Archbishop Schrembs he told me that during the morning a representative of Associated Industries had called on him and told him of my presence at strike headquarters the day before.

In New York the Chancery office had also been informed of our activities, and when a priest came to see us in our Tenth Avenue headquarters during the seamen's strike the visit was immediately reported. This happened often enough to indicate to me that there were spies from the employers among the strikers and that the employers felt that the Church was on their side in any industrial dispute. The worker present at Mass was in the eyes of bishop and priest just like any member of Knights of Columbus or Holy Name Society, but as soon as he went on strike he became a dangerous radical, and the publicity he got linked him with saboteurs and Communists.

We met other bishops who visited our offices and told us about the work in their dioceses, in the co-operative movement, parish credit unions, circulating libraries and other activities among the laity. They sat down to eat with us—Bishop O'Hara, Bishop Waters, Bishop Busch—and abbots of monasteries, who are also princes of the Church, came too. Every six months when we sent out our appeals, there were a number of bishops who always responded, even those who disagreed so strongly on some

aspects of our work that they would not permit meetings in their dioceses and certainly not houses of hospitality. However, some houses opened up not specifically associated with *The Catholic Worker*, but owing their inspiration to it. Those who run these houses feel themselves to be children of the movement since they work with the poor and dispossessed. However, they do not hold to the distributist or anarchist or pacifist positions that are taken editorially in *The Catholic Worker*. They leave the discussion of these issues to others, and do the immediate work of showing their love for their brothers in the simple practical method of the corporal works of mercy.

The spiritual works of mercy include enlightening the ignorant, rebuking the sinner, consoling the afflicted, as well as bearing wrongs patiently, and we have always classed picket lines and the distribution of literature among these works.

During the course of writing about labor and capital, we began a study club at the Mott Street headquarters. It was an outgrowth of the seamen's strike and was started by John Cort, a young Harvard graduate who was working with us at the time, and Martin Wersing, a union official in the electrical workers. Father John Monaghan and a group of other union men joined with them in forming what they called the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. After it had obtained its start under our auspices, the group moved to Canal Street so that they would have room for their meetings and could handle the avalanche of inquiry which came to them, once they were under way.

Their aim and endeavor was to assist the worker to organize and to enlighten the Catholic in the existing unions as to the teachings of the popes in regard to labor. They set out at once to oppose the Communist and gangster elements (two separate problems) in the longshoreman and other unions, and their policy came into conflict with ours.

As Peter pointed out, ours was a long-range program, looking for ownership by the workers of the means of

production, the abolition of the assembly line, decentralized factories, the restoration of crafts and ownership of property. This meant, of course, an accent on the agrarian and rural aspects of our economy and a changing of emphasis from the city to the land.

The immediate job at hand was enough for the Association. They disagreed too with our indiscriminate help in strikes where there was strong Communist influence, and our loss of the opportunity to get our own men into positions of vantage in order to influence others.

Peter, however, talked about Christ's technique, of working from the bottom and with the few, of self-discipline and self-organization, of sacrifice rather than enlightened self-interest, and of course, of the synthesis of cult, culture and cultivation. How he loved the roll of that phrase. Once when he spoke to the seamen at the Tenth Avenue strike headquarters he attacked communism, but it was by reviewing a book by André Gide and by talking of his disillusionment with the Russian regime. I supposed he considered the meeting from the standpoint of culture, most of the seamen never having heard of André Gide, or if they had, only of the unsavory aspects of his erotic life. Sometimes we used to sigh over Peter's idea as to what would be dynamic thought for the workers.

There is so much more to the Catholic Worker Movement than labor and capital. It is people who are important, not the masses. When I read Pope Pius XII's Christmas message, in which he distinguished between the masses and the people, I almost wished I had named our publication *The People*, instead of *The Catholic Worker*.

We published many heavy articles on capital and labor, on strikes and labor conditions, on the assembly line and all the other evils of industrialism. But it was a whole picture we were presenting of man and his destiny and so we emphasized less, as the years went by, the organized-labor aspect of the paper.

It has been said that it was *The Catholic Worker* and its stories of poverty and exploitation that aroused the

priests to start labor schools, go out on picket lines, take sides in strikes with the worker, and that brought about an emphasis on the need to study sociology in the seminaries.

And many a priest who afterward became famous for his interest in labor felt that we had in a way deserted the field, had left the cause of the union man. Bishops and priests appearing on the platforms of the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. conventions felt that we had departed from our original intention and undertaken work in the philosophical and theological fields that might better have been left to the clergy. The discussion of the morality of modern war, for instance, and application of moral principle in specific conflicts. Labor leaders themselves felt that in our judgment of war, we judged them also for working in the gigantic armaments race, as indeed we did. Ours is indeed an unpopular front:

When we began our work there were thirteen million unemployed. The greatest problem of the day was the problem of work and the machine.

The state entered in to solve these problems by dole and work relief, by setting up so many bureaus that we were swamped with initials. NIRA gave plan to NRA, and as NRA was declared unconstitutional another organization, another administration was set up. The problem of the modern state loomed up as never before in American life. The Communists, stealing our American thunder, clamored on the one hand for relief and on the other set up Jeffersonian schools of democracy.

Peter also quoted Jefferson—"He governs best who governs least." One of his criticisms of labor was that it was aiding in the creation of the Welfare State, the Servile State, instead of aiming for the ownership of the means of production and acceptance of the responsibility that it entailed.

COMMUNITY

□ One of the great German Protestant theologians said after the end of the last war that what the world needed was community and liturgy.

The desire for liturgy, and I suppose he meant sacrifice, worship, a sense of reverence, is being awakened in great masses of people throughout the world by the new revolutionary leaders. A sense of individual worth in dignity is the first result of the call made on them to enliven their physical and spiritual capacities in the struggle for a life more in keeping with the dignity of man. One might almost say that the need to worship grows in them with the sense of reverence, so that the sad result is giant-sized posters of Lenin and Stalin, Tito and Mao. The dictator becomes divine.

We had a mad friend once, a Jewish worker from the East Side, who wore a rosary around his neck and came to us reciting the Psalms in Hebrew. He stayed with us for weeks at a time, for although mad, he had the gentleness of St. Francis. He helped Hergenhan in our garden on Staten Island, and he liked to walk around in his bare feet. "I can feel things growing," he said. "I look at the little plants, and I draw them up out of the earth with the power of love in my eyes."

He sat at the table with us once and held up a piece of dark rye bread which he was eating. "It is the black bread of the poor. It is Russian Jewish bread. It is the flesh of Lenin. Lenin held bread up to the people and he said, 'This is my body, broken for you.' So they worship Lenin. He brought them bread."

There is nothing lukewarm about such worship, nothing tepid. It is the crying out of a great hunger. One thinks of the words of Ezekiel, condemning the sheep-

herds who did not feed their sheep. I know that my college friend Rayna never heard the word of God preached and she never met a Christian. The failure is ours, and that of the shepherds.

Peter was not so much interested in labor as he was in work and community. He felt that as long as men sought jobs and wages, and accepted the assembly line and the material comforts the factory system brought, they would not think in terms of community, except for that which the union brought them. They might be gathered together in time of crisis, during strikes, but would they listen to what he said about the need for ownership and responsibility?

Every talk of Peter's about the social order led to the land. He spoke always as a peasant, but as a practical one. He knew the craving of the human heart for a toehold on the land, for a home of one's own, but he also knew how impossible it was to attain it except through community, through men banding together in farming communes to live to a certain extent in common, work together, own machinery together, start schools together.

He held the collective farms in Palestine up for our consideration. Since Peter's death, Martin Buber's book, *Paths in Utopia*, has told of the experiments in Israel, and Thomas Sugrue has written a book, *Watch for the Morning*, on these great adventures in building up a place in the desert for a dispossessed people. Claire Huchet Bishop has written about the communities in Europe in her books, *France Alive* and *All Things Common*, showing how men can become owners of the means of production and build up a community of work together.

But these books were not written when Peter started to talk, and he knew that people were not ready to listen. He was a prophet and met the usual fate of the prophet. The work of the co-operatives in Nova Scotia had attracted the attention of the world, but Father Jimmy Tomkins said, "People must get down to rock bottom before they have the vision and the desperate courage to

work along these lines and to overcome their natural individualism."

Community—that was the social answer to the long loneliness. That was one of the attractions of religious life and why couldn't lay people share in it? Not just the basic community of the family, but also a community of families, with a combination of private and communal property. This could be a farming commune, a continuation of the agronomic university Peter spoke of as a part of the program we were to work for. Peter had vision and we all delighted in these ideas.

"But not a five-year plan," he would say. He did not believe in blueprints or a planned economy. Things grow organically.

A parish priest in Canada, Father John McGoey, had a vision of a community of families. From a poor parish in Toronto, he inspired a number of families who were jobless and living on relief to band together and study the problems of getting back to the land. He secured a tract of land for them, obtained the co-operation of the city's relief bureau, and moved the families out of the slums. A school for the children was started, a weaving project set up, gardens put in, small animals cared for, and the families got on their feet again. With the ending of the depression and the beginning of preparations for war, some of them moved back to the factory neighborhoods again.

Monsignor Luigi Ligutti, head of the Catholic Rural Life Conference, did the same with a group of unemployed miners in Iowa. He obtained land and funds from the government, and the settlement he established has prospered. In both these cases government help was needed. Peter did not wish to turn to the government for funds. "He who is a pensioner of the state is a slave of the state," he felt. Neither Father McGoey nor Monsignor Ligutti felt enslaved, but they did admit there had been red tape and many headaches involved in getting the help needed.

Peter's plan was that groups should borrow from mutual-aid credit unions in the parish to start what he first liked to call agronomic universities, where the worker could become a scholar and the scholar a worker. Or he wanted people to give the land and money. He always spoke of giving. Those who had land and tools should give. Those who had capital should give. Those who had labor should give that. "Love is an exchange of gifts," St. Ignatius had said. It was in these simple, practical, down-to-earth ways that people could show their love for each other. If the love was not there in the beginning, but only the need, such gifts made love grow.

"To make love." Peter liked to study phrases, and to use them as though they were newly discovered. (*Honest to God* was the title of one of his series of essays.)

The strangeness of the phrase "to make love" strikes me now and reminds me of that aphorism of St. John of the Cross, "Where there is no love, put love and you will find love." I've thought of it and followed it many times these eighteen years of community life.

Peter set much store on labor as a prime requisite for a new order. "Work, not wages." That was an I.W.W. slogan and a Communist slogan too, and Peter liked it. During the days of the depression the Communists and our Catholic Workers often collided in street demonstrations. *Down with Chiang Kai-shek!* said one of their posters, when we were demonstrating against evictions. *Work, Not Wages* was another picket sign, when what the Communists were demanding was more relief, unemployment insurance, and every other benefit they could get from the state. Packed in that one tight little phrase is all the dynamite of revolution. Men wanted work more than they wanted bread, and they wanted to be responsible for their work, which meant ownership.

I know that as this is read, it will be questioned. "This is how people should be, but are they? Give them relief checks and they will sit back and do nothing for the rest of their days. When they do have jobs they see how much they can get away with in giving as little labor as

possible for the highest pay they can get." One hears these complaints from householders and even from heads of religious orders, who complain that postulants enter without the slightest knowledge of any skills that will help the order. And girls do not know how to cook or sew or keep house. With the lack of knowledge of how to work has come a failure in physical strength too.

Peter was no dreamer but knew men as they were. That is why he spoke so much of the need for a philosophy of work. Once they had that, once their desires were changed, half the battle was won. To make men desire poverty and hard work, that was the problem. It would take example, and the grace of God, to do it.

The word philosophy is bandied around a great deal today. John Cogley, who formerly headed our house of hospitality in Chicago and is now an editor of *The Commonwealth*, told us about one of his professors at Fribourg who lectured on Russian philosophy. "In all their schools, whether of law, medicine, art, engineering or agriculture, philosophy is required study," he said. And that is right, because in order to achieve integration, the whole man, there must be an underlying philosophy that directs and lends meaning to his life.

During World War II, a French Communist wrote an article reprinted in the *New Masses* which emphasized the need for a Communist in the Sorbonne or any other college to teach history or science from a Communist point of view. The party never misses the dominant importance of philosophy.

Peter's Christian philosophy of work was this. God is our creator. God made us in His image and likeness. Therefore we are creators. He gave us a garden to till and cultivate. We become co-creators by our responsible acts, whether in bringing forth children, or producing food, furniture or clothing. The joy of creativeness should be ours.

But because of the Fall the curse is laid on us of having to earn our bread by the sweat of our brows, in labor. St. Paul said that since the Fall nature itself travaileth and

groaneth. So man had to contend with fallen nature in the beasts and in the earth as well as in himself. But when he overcomes the obstacles, he obtains again to the joy of creativity. Work is not then all pain and drudgery.

All of us know these things instinctively, like Tom Sawyer whose example led others to covet his white-washing job—or the workman, healthy tired, after a good day's toil like Levin reaping with the peasants in *Anna Karenina*.

Craftsmen, not assembly-line workers, know this physical, but not nervous, fatigue and the joy of rest after labor. Peter was never a craftsman but he was an unskilled laborer who knew how to use an ax, a pick and a shovel, how to break rocks and mend roads.

Peter and his slogans! "Fire the bosses" meant "Call no man master, for all ye are brothers." It meant "Bear ye one another's burdens."

"Eat what you raise and raise what you eat" meant that you ate the things indigenous to the New York climate, such as tomatoes, not oranges; honey, not sugar; etc. We used to tease him because he drank coffee, chocolate or tea, but "he ate what was set before him." Had he been a young husband raising a family he would have done without tea, or coffee, as indeed such a disciple as Larry Heaney did. Larry was in charge of the Holy Family House in Milwaukee until he married and was able with another Catholic Worker family to buy a fine farm in Missouri.

Peter liked to talk about the four-hour day. Four hours for work, four hours for study and discussion; but he didn't practice it. Knowing that people could not fit into neat categories he would seize upon them whenever he could for discussion and indoctrination.

Everyone, of course, wished to indoctrinate. They no sooner had a message than they wished to give it. Ideas which burst upon them like a flood of light made the young people want to get out and change the world.

We always had the war of the worker and scholar when the former accused the latter of side-stepping

work. The joke went around the country that the Catholic Worker crowd lived on lettuce one bright summer of discussion at Maryfarm when students from ten universities around the country arrived for long visits. One young politician active in public life in Ohio, spent months with Peter and then returned to the Midwest to teach, eventually starting the Christ the King Center for Men at Herman, Pennsylvania.

Farms like ours began to dot the country. In Aptos, California, in Cape May, New Jersey, in Upton, Massachusetts, in Avon, Ohio, in South Lyon, Michigan—a dozen sprang up as Catholic Worker associates. Many others consisted of young married groups trying to restore the idea of community.

Some were started and abandoned as too isolated, or because of lack of water, lack of funds, lack of people who knew how to work. Men found out the reasons for cities and relief rolls when they ventured onto the land and sought to do manual labor. How to work in industry so as not to compromise oneself and yet earn a living for a family?

The problem did not really become acute until the family entered in. The family thought Peter's farming commune idea was solely for them. The scholars thought the agronomic university idea was for them. The sick and unemployed thought the Catholic Worker farms in general were for women and children and the helpless.

We all wrote a great deal about it in the paper and found interest in the most unlikely places. When I went to visit Tom Mooney, the labor leader who was imprisoned for twenty years for the Preparedness Day bombing in San Francisco, I found him and other prisoners in San Quentin interested in the land. Ramsey, King and Connor—I do not remember their first names—were officials of the Marine Firemen's Union who had also been imprisoned, as all the labor movement believed, on a framed charge of murder. I saw them too at that time and found them interested in the land.

"There's never a seaman wants to settle in the city,"

one of them said. "What they want is a little chicken farm of their own."

The desire was strong for private property, but even stronger for community. Man is not made to live alone. We all recognized that truth. But we were not truly communitarian, Peter said—we were only gregarious, as most people in cities are. Peter knew that most of us not only had not been trained to disciplined work, but we did not know how to work together. I remember seeing one seaman who was washing our kitchen floor throw down his mop when another man started to help him, saying, "Well, if you want to do it, go ahead and do it. The job is yours."

We had a number of seamen in our first years, so many in fact that one sarcastic sociologist wrote of our efforts on the land as being not farming communes for families but rest houses for celibate seamen. There were many such comments those first few years but the interest was widespread because we actually were trying to put into effect the ideas that Peter talked about. We were learning through grim experience, "the hard way" everyone said, but I never knew any other way. We consoled ourselves that we might not be establishing model communities, but many a family was getting a vacation, many a sick person was nursed back to health, crowds of slum children had the run of the woods and fields for weeks, and groups of students spent happy hours discussing the green revolution.

We write a great deal about the farms in *The Catholic Worker* to share experiences with our readers and to get their advice. Realizing that we were poor like themselves, without equipment, unskilled, floundering along, we have found friends who were not afraid to tell us of their own poverty and their hard-won knowledge. We have printed letters from owners of small farms as well as from farm laborers.

I myself traveled through the Southwest from Arkansas, down through Texas and Arizona and southern California, and visited the migrant camps through the state of

California. In fact, I probably covered the route of the Joad family in *Grapes of Wrath*. After seeing that movie and the dilapidated old car that carried their poor household things across mountain and desert, I have never since been afraid to travel in our Catholic Worker cars, which are mostly discards from our readers. I have had clutches come out of the floor into my hands, the gas pedal fall down through the floor board, the battery fall out of the car, and innumerable tires go flat. And these mishaps always occurred miraculously enough within a step of home. Often at the end of a long trip just as I was pulling into the home stretch, the car would go dead. On one such occasion I was driving a man who had just been operated on for cancer to our retreat house for a convalescent period.

With one of these cars, but the best of them, bought for us by Harold McKinnon, a San Francisco lawyer, I made a trip down the long valley in California and visited each of the camps established by the government for the protection of the migrants. Certainly whenever we have written in *The Catholic Worker* about the conditions through the country we have, tried to see and study them firsthand, and to work out a solution that would be within the means and the capacities of all.

And what are these means and capacities?

As Peter saw it, to live according to Gospel simplicity meant that you begged when you were in need and by this you gave the opportunity to the rich to become poor for Christ's sake. "Appeals, not demands," was another of his slogans.

And since he was most often talking of the destitute, the unemployed, this was the line he usually took. But our young married couples did not fit into this category. "Man should earn his living by the sweat of his brow," Peter repeated, "and a gentleman, truly speaking, is one who does not live on the sweat of someone else's brow." In other words, he worked.

Our Catholic Worker retreats advocated detachment from unnecessary luxuries. The savings of those who do

not smoke, drink beer, go to movies, use cosmetics, buy radios, cars, television sets, should be enough to buy a farm to enable them to make a start. And yet it did not always work out in this way. Men might not indulge themselves in any way, and yet be made destitute by sickness and death. And there was many a form of sickness that stalked in our midst.

I wrote one long leading article for *The Catholic Worker* a few years ago which one of the girls in the office entitled, "What Dream Did They Dream—Utopia or Suffering," in which this mystery of suffering is discussed. Recently I have heard from friends in China, missionaries, who asked for more copies of that issue to send to their friends because I emphasized so much the necessity of suffering, and the glory of suffering for a cause. I read over that article recently and noticed that I left out many of the specific sufferings that our friends in the apostolate have endured, the death of children, the loss of wife or husband, the mental breakdowns.

People tried to save for some purpose. But often their savings had to be spent for doctors or hospital bills, or to help others. How could one save when people were in need? And were not the two ideas contradictory, to perform the works of mercy at a personal sacrifice, and to save to provide for one's own? But one's own family of course came first. These were the arguments of those who wished to marry. They were not the problems of the single.

The Heaney family worked and saved to buy a farm, and joined with the Martin Paul family and Ruth Ann Heaney's brother to make a down payment and to stock the place. Martie Paul had already failed once, because of the war and his years in the army. He had been given a piece of land in northern Minnesota and with the help of Al Reser and his wife from the Chicago *Catholic Worker* had built a few cabins and made a start at a farming commune, calling it after St. Isadore, the patron of farmers. Don Humphrey and his wife from the Milwaukee *Catholic Worker* and their children lived and starved on the

place for a while too. It was a grim experience, though all seem now to look back on their days there with nostalgia.

In the case of the St. Isadore's farm, Martie was drafted, the Resers lost a child from some obscure pancreatic disorder, and Al nearly died with asthma. The Humphreys stayed on the farm for a while, Mary with four children and Don away working on the road to Alaska. Later they moved into St. Cloud so that he could make a living for his growing family.

In the case of the Holy Family farm in Missouri, Larry died suddenly after a bout with pneumonia. He had an abscessed lung and died from the anesthetic, leaving a wife and six children. The farm is still in operation with Ruth Ann's brother and other young men helping Martie with their labor, and contributing financially too.

The Detroit farm was given for our use by a priest's father who lost one son during the war and bore the suffering of his priest son's life for four years in a concentration camp. St. Benedict's farm, at S. Lyon, Michigan, is run for the benefit of the men who live at St. Francis House in Detroit. Produce is raised there, and the hundred acres provide living quarters for a number of the men. There is also Marybrook, a retreat house farm for week-end groups of students and workers.

Our Lady of the Wayside farm in Avon, Ohio, was given to us also, and Bill Gauchat, his wife and their five children share the land and the buildings with another Catholic Worker couple and their children, a Mexican family, and others who fall by the wayside and need help. They have sheltered unmarried girls who were having babies, have cared for sick children, taken in migrant families until they found work and homes, and with the most limited space and facilities have had summer schools and Sunday conferences for the readers of *The Catholic Worker* in that area.

St. Benedict's farm at Upton, Massachusetts, was a bargain. We paid a thousand dollars for one hundred acres and an old farmhouse which was big enough to shelter many visitors as well as the families and single people

who built it up. It got off to a bad start, with two young men in charge, one of whom wished to have a farming commune and the other a house of hospitality on the land. The farming commune idea won out; then with the first two families there was another conflict over the division of labor. Both men were hard workers. One of them wanted to farm and let the other work in a neighboring institution to raise the cash needed for seed and tools. The one who worked outside St. Benedict's thought that both should share this responsibility. The man who originally wished to remain and farm left to return to Boston. The young man who remained moved not much later for job and health considerations, turning over the house which he had built out of an abandoned schoolhouse to a man whose wife was ill. This schoolhouse home was later leased to a father and seven sons who have lived there for the last ten years.

There are three other families on St. Benedict's now and twenty-five children. The second to settle at Upton was a mother whose artist husband was imprisoned as a conscientious objector during World War II. She had her baby while her husband was in prison and returned to her one-room farm-home to wait patiently for his release some years later. The husband is a fine craftsman. Since his release he has received many a commission for stained glass so that he has been able to employ others on the farm to help him. There are four children in that family now. The chap who returned to the city then came back to the farm, where he now lives with his wife and eight children. Another family in the village of Upton was burned out, and came to live in the original farmhouse, now used for guests. They have decided to join the community and build. The farm is held in the name of Ade Bethune and John Magee, the former head of the Boston Catholic Worker group, as trustees for *The Catholic Worker*, and plots of land of varying sizes are leased for fifty years to the families.

On our Easton farm, where we also had this trustee ownership, deeds of three acres each were given to fami-

lies until the revolt occurred of the two families who wished twenty acres, not three. This resulted in our deeding them the original farm of twenty-seven acres. When Tamar was married to David Hennessy, they remained there for two years before buying a farm of their own in Stotler's Crossroads, West Virginia, where they lived for three years. This started out to be a community of three families, but that too was a failure, the first two families leaving after a year. One family indeed stayed only a few months and then moved back to the city. Right now Tamar and David are purchasing a farm on Staten Island so they can be near his New York job.

One of the main difficulties of all these farm ventures is the lack of skills, money and equipment; lack of leadership too is a factor. There could be, I believe, groups of families on the land, surrounding a chapel, disciplined by family life and daily attendance at Mass, all subject to one another, with a division of skills and labor and accepting too the authority of one co-ordinator. Ideally speaking, this should be as successful as any community of monks who maintain themselves by the labor of their hands.

It is no use comparing such a community of families, however, to a community of monks, because the latter are often maintained by the alms of the faithful. Land is often left to a monastery and usually there is income from schools. If lay communities were given the start, if young families were given an initial subsidy, free and clear, and left to work out their way of life, great things could be done.

At Peter Maurin farm, on Staten Island, we have a three-acre asparagus bed which might eventually bring in enough money to pay the taxes of five hundred dollars a year. Our bakery there could make the place self-sustaining if we did not give away all the bread.

Through the skill of David Mason, former head of the house of hospitality in Philadelphia, proofreader and writer by profession, a "surplus commodity" oven from a battleship was set up in a little outer kitchen in the rear

of the farmhouse. We can bake a hundred loaves at a time and several of us have learned to bake. Now we have the satisfaction of feeding our two houses, on Staten Island and Chrystie Street, and the breadline of hundreds of men who come twice a day for meals, with the best of whole-wheat bread, made from whole-grain flour which we buy by the half ton.

What a delightful thing it is to be boldly profligate, to ignore the price of coffee and go on serving the long line of destitute men who come to us, good coffee and the finest of bread.

"Nothing is too good for the poor," our editor Tom Sullivan says, and he likes that aphorism especially when he is helping himself to something extra good.

Tom is the "co-ordinator" of the house of hospitality on Chrystie Street, New York, though we never use that title. He is in charge of the house, and his is a gentle and unobtrusive authority. He has won the respect of the men and their cooperation so that many of them take on jobs in the house and kitchen and keep the work going. There are a number who have worked with us in the past, who have been willing to take responsibility but unwilling for others to use initiative. Tom keeps the books, divides the money up in paying the bills, watches every expenditure scrupulously, writes a column for the paper, keeps a quiet eye on the men in the house and does a great deal of praying. People love him because he loves God, and for love of God loves the poor. They feel this in him and trust him.

FAMILY

□ Once a Midwest priest said to me that if I were a woman of family, the things I wrote in *The Catholic Worker* about community and personalism would have more validity. I accepted his criticism at the moment, especially since I was going through a difficult time. I was thirty-eight, wishing I were married and living the ordinary naturally happy life and had not come under the dynamic influence of Peter Maurin. Every now and then I'd look at him and groan, "Why did you have to start all this anyway?"

I thought this criticism of the positions I took in my writing valid because it gave me an excuse to dally with the idea of marriage. Afterward I thought indignantly—"But I *am* a woman of family. I have had husband and home life—I have a daughter and she presents problems to me right now. How can I let anyone put over on me the idea that I am a single person? I am a mother, and the mother of a very large family at that. Being a mother is fulfillment, it is surrender to others, it is Love and therefore of course it is suffering. He hath made 'a barren woman to dwell in a house: the joyful mother of children.'"

I saw the film *Grapes of Wrath* at this time and the picture of that valiant woman, the vigorous mother, the heart of the home, the loved one, appealed to me strongly. Yet men are terrified of momism and women in turn want a shoulder to lean on. That conflict was in me. A woman does not feel whole without a man. And for a woman who had known the joys of marriage, yes, it was hard. It was years before I awakened without that longing for a face pressed against my breast, an arm about my shoulder. The sense of loss was there. It was a price I had

paid. I was Abraham who had sacrificed Isaac. And yet I had Isaac. I had Tamar.

She was, of course, everything to me. I have not even to this day ceased to look upon her with wonder. When I looked at her tiny, perfect hands and my own, already worn though I was only twenty-seven, I marveled at her newness. Tamar crowing on the beach, learning to walk on the sands. Tamar at three meeting her father again and saying to me resentfully, "That is *my* father, not your father"—oh, cruel stab! Tamar singing, Tamar praying—"Does the Blessed Mother mind if I say my prayers standing on my head? And how can I pray when I have to keep laughing."

Tamar growing up in community.

But before the Catholic Worker community came about I had to think in terms of a job and rent to be paid, food purchased. There was always a wrench in going away and leaving her with others, whether in a day nursery in New York or with a family in Hollywood. When she was ill I stayed home from work to care for her, and she had the usual run of children's diseases, chicken pox, measles, whooping cough, abscessed ears, bronchitis, in addition to malaria contracted in Mexico. I had her, even in those working years, all to myself evenings and Saturdays and Sundays.

But in community it was another story. With the beginnings of *The Catholic Worker*, my working day began at early Mass with the *Opus Dei*, and ended often at midnight. She was no longer my only one. I should have known what to expect when Peter Maurin stood over her sickbed when she had measles, indoctrinating the doctor. At night when visitors came, workers, scholars, priests, laymen, I left her in her bath and all but forgot her in the heat of discussion. In the delight of staying up late, Tamar stayed in the tub till the water was cold, making boats of the soap and her toys.

There were plenty who laid claim to my sympathy and loving care to the extent of forgetting I had personal family obligations, and there were some who were ex-

tremely jealous and found ways of showing it. There was one young woman, sent to us from a hospital for convalescent care, who stayed with us for years, and she was frank in her jealousy to the extent of taking my child's clothes and giving them away, destroying her specimens (she was an avid collector like her father) and venting her petty spite on her in other ways. I had put up with it, if only for the reason that my daughter did. From her babyhood she had a sympathy for all suffering things and she recognized this poor warped creature as a sufferer.

Probably Tamar enjoyed the freedom my preoccupations gave her. She had playmates in the building on Fifteenth Street, Freddy Rubino, who still comes to *The Catholic Worker* meetings, and the Liguori and Riedel children. When we left Fifteenth Street she went to an academy on Staten Island, run by the Sisters of St. Dorothy, an excellent teaching order, but she returned home week ends and holidays. She spent her summers on our farm at Easton and her companions were the colored children from Harlem and white children from the lower West Side, none of whom had ever vacationed in the country before. Some of the children were highly intelligent and others were of very low mentality; I learned how hard it is for bright children to play with retarded ones. Tamar and a little boy, Arthur, used to make adobe houses; an entire village was constructed of little mud bricks and it grew to considerable size on a large cement pavement in back of the house out of the way of traffic. A family of feeble-minded children were with us on the farm for several years, and one of the first acts of these children was to destroy this little village. The woman throwing out the terraria and aquaria, the birds' nests and egg cocoons of insects, and the children always on the lookout for something to destroy—these were trials.

Tamar never was very articulate about it. I probably felt it more than she did.

She grew up knowing what she wanted, and that was to make things. She read a great deal. When she was occupied with books on biology or astronomy I knew she

was happy, engrossed; but when she read fiction, I knew she was escaping, that she was not as happy as she might be. I transferred her for one brief term to a more fashionable school and here she was so miserable that she read a book a day. It was not the leisurely reading of *David Copperfield* or the Marylea series. It was truly an escape. So I brought her back to St. Dorothy's, where the children took daily walks and helped in Saturday's cleaning, where there were only twenty boarders and it was a family.

When she was in first year high school she lived at home. That is, at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, and left the house at seven-thirty, not returning until four-thirty. There was too much homework—too many activities after school. Life was exciting enough at the Catholic Worker—there were enough extra curriculum lectures, visitors, walks, expeditions with the young people's volunteer group of which she now became a part, so that I felt she was overburdened with her schoolwork.

She was beginning to be interested in the young men who came around, young fellows from Notre Dame or the University of Chicago. She was fourteen then.

She wanted to farm. She wanted to marry young and live on a farm. She was impatient with school. She had a proposal when she was fifteen and we all took it seriously. After all why should she not marry at sixteen, she said. Many people did.

Eighteen was time enough! I was inexorable. What I did understand, however, was that she wished to fit herself for marriage and I could not see that the school she attended, or any other high school was going to do that.

"Why wasn't I a retarded child," she groaned, "so that I could go to one of these schools where they teach crafts?"

Monsignor Luigi Ligutti heard this pathetic cry and recommended St. Martine's, an *Ecole Ménagère* just an hour's ride out of Montreal. "She can learn spinning and weaving there, and even how to make straw hats," he said enthusiastically. It was a regular high school but all

studies are taught in French. Tamar wanted to try it, just to take the crafts, so one miserable fall day we took the bus for Montreal and she was registered at the school where the tuition was only eighteen dollars a month, including board and room.

When I left Tamar that afternoon and went back to Montreal, I never was so unhappy, never felt so great a sense of loneliness. She was growing up, she was growing up to be married. It did not seem possible. I was always having to be parted from her. No matter how many times I gave up mother, father, husband, brother, daughter, for His sake, I had to do it over again.

She enjoyed the school, though she only stayed for the winter term and then returned to Easton to live at Mary-farm for the spring and summer. I had to go to the West Coast for a few months that spring to visit our houses of hospitality there. When I returned I found she was in love, this time most seriously, and determined to marry.

She was not yet seventeen, so in order to continue her schooling I sent her to the home of Ade Bethune in Newport, where she worked not only with Ade's apprentices, but in her household. She learned to shop intelligently (it was a time of ration books), to buy and cook cheap cuts of meat, to bake and churn, keep a kitchen fire going, care for small animals in a back yard—rabbits, chickens, even white rats and canaries. She learned calligraphy and how to bind a book. There were evenings when one of the monks from a Benedictine priory near by gave talks on philosophy and theology; there were concerts of chamber music at friends' houses, folk dancing on Friday nights, evenings at the marine hospital teaching crafts to wounded sailors. How to take care of the money you earned, how to earn money by caring for children, sitting with invalids, repainting murals in an old church—these too she learned.

When she had spent her year at Ade's, she went for another six months to a school of applied agriculture on Long Island. She would have stayed longer except that her eighteenth birthday came around and she and the

young man she loved announced that they would be married as soon as the three Sundays elapsed for the calling of the bans at Sunday Mass.

What a wedding that was! The wedding breakfast was to take place at the Easton farm and Tamar and I spent days beforehand cleaning and scrubbing until it was hard to get the grime out of our hands. It was a wedding in poverty because the young people were to start out in a barracks-like house on the farm, surrounded by a three-acre garden. The house had been occupied previously by a migrant family who left it in anything but appetizing condition. The day before the wedding some homeless dogs killed Tamar's pet goat, leaving two orphan kids, and that tragedy and her care for the little animals cast a shadow on the great event.

It was during the war; there were few volunteers with us, most of the young men were away, and Easton was two hours out of New York. It was a mid-week wedding, so there were not more than a score of guests. Of course Peter was there, thoughtful and happy.

"He is going to make a speech at my wedding breakfast," Tamar said nervously, remembering all the other occasions when Peter delighted in the opportunity to indoctrinate. At the wedding of one of our fellow workers in New York a few years previous Peter had talked so long to the first sitting at the wedding breakfast that the second sitting of our guests in the house of hospitality had a hard time getting anything to eat. Perhaps Tamar was thinking too of the way Peter stood over her bed when she had measles and indoctrinated the physician.

The nuptial Mass was at nine o'clock and it being wartime there was only one car to transport the guests to and from the church. I had to be chauffeur since there was no one else with a license to drive. We got up at six to heat water for bathing (it was a typical old farmhouse with no plumbing) and to get the fire started in the range for the breakfast. Everyone was fasting in order to receive communion at the wedding, but we wanted to have coffee on the stove and the eggs all ready to scramble

when we returned. Someone had brought a gigantic ham, and there was an immense cake from an Italian parish in Brooklyn, the remains of an Easter feast there.

Peter was up bright and early. As I hustled Martha-like through the kitchen, putting the finishing touches to the room, he followed me around trying to make a few points, practicing on me for the speech he was about to make at the breakfast. He loved occasions.

With impatience I turned on him. "Can't you see how busy I am!" I cried reproachfully.

With complete meekness, he turned away, and not long after I saw him sauntering down the rocky road which led to the highway. It was very early yet, and I felt guilty, sorry for having repulsed him. It was the first time I had ever spoken so impatiently to *him*. Getting the borrowed car started I hastened down the road after him. "If you are going so early to church, Peter," I called to him, "I will drive you down. Get in." He got in obediently. "I'm sorry I was so rude," I told him. "After all, you must realize that my only daughter is being married. It's a most wonderful day for both her and me. We can't think of anything else but that. I really can't discuss farming for profit on such a morning."

Peter was magnanimous as always. "I knew a man once," he said, trying to be personal to meet me on my plane, "who got so excited on the day his daughter was married that he slapped her." There was no more to the story than that, evidently, and I wondered who the man was, and why the incident had made an impression. But I didn't inquire further. I just tried to hint that Tamar would prefer no speeches at the wedding breakfast, especially the speech which we knew Peter was dying to make about "pigs for profit." One of the seamen who was in charge of the farm had recently ventured into a partnership with a neighbor and lured by wartime profits, was trying to raise pigs, on our communitarian project, for profit! It was occupying Peter's mind so that he could think of nothing else.

It was a beautiful wedding, simple and happy, and ev-

eryone returned to the farm to feast. The married couple were to stay in their new home and spend their honeymoon scraping off whitewash, painting their house and getting a garden in. To supplement his mail-order distributor book business, David was working with a roofer and had little time off from work. There were the baby kids preoccupying Tamar during the breakfast. It looked as though one of them would not live. And then Peter began his speech! We all laughed, but we all had to listen too. After all, it would not have been a Catholic Worker wedding without it. The neighbors were there, some priests were there, the residents of the Catholic Worker farm were there and guests from New York. It was an occasion and occasions called for speeches. And speeches were always affairs of moment with Peter. There were no idle words with him. When he spoke, it was "yea, yea" or "nay, nay." But it took him a long time to say it.

Our poor darling Peter! It was the last speech he made, as a matter of fact, because within a few months, he was stricken down, he lost his memory, and suddenly he could no longer "think," as he tried to tell us sadly.

Joy and sorrow, life and death, always so closely together!

Tamar's family lives near us today, and now there are five grandchildren. God has indeed made me, the barren woman, to dwell in her house, the joyful mother of children. I had always wanted a big family, and here I have them near me. I am seeing my children's children about me.

Tamar is partly responsible for the title of this book in that when I was beginning it she was writing me about how alone a mother of young children always is. I had also just heard from an elderly woman who had lived a long and full life, and she too spoke of her loneliness. I thought again, "The only answer in this life, to the loneliness we are all bound to feel, is community. The living together, working together, sharing together, loving God and loving our brother, and living close to him in community so we can show our love for Him."

RETREAT

□ There is a Jesuit retreat house for men on Staten Island; there is a Passionist house in Jamaica. The Cenacle of St. Regis has one on One Hundred Fortieth Street with a view of the Hudson. There is a retreat house at the Convent of Mary Reparatrix on Twenty-eighth Street across from the Little Church Around the Corner. It was to this convent that I went to spend a few days soon after the first issue of *The Catholic Worker* came out. It was my first retreat. I did not enjoy it at all. Perhaps there are those who would say that a retreat is not the time to think of enjoying oneself. It is a time to take stock, to make an inventory, to meditate on one's sins and resolve to do better. It should also be a time of spiritual refreshment.

But I was not refreshed. It was the middle of summer and very hot. There was no garden enclosure in which to wander. It was closed in, this convent, crushed in by the stone walls all about. The church was small. Every day the Sacred Host, the round white disk of bread which had suddenly at the priest's words of consecration become the Body of Our Lord, was enclosed in a jewel-encrusted ostensorium and placed above the altar, surrounded by candles and flowers. All day long two by two the white-and-blue-robed nuns knelt, taking turns each hour to worship in silent adoration. A grill separated them and the sanctuary from the main body of the church, into which shoppers, tourists, business people and workers came for adoration, contrition, thanksgiving and supplication. Being on retreat, I was allowed to kneel close to the altar at a little opening in the grill at the side, having a special *prie-Dieu* to myself.

I should not have made a retreat by myself, I felt. I had

been a Catholic only a few years and I was not ready for the long days of silence, of reading, of intimate colloquy with one of the nuns. If I had been with a group I might have enjoyed my stay. As it was I felt stifled, unable to comprehend what I was reading, unable to talk. It was a hard time. I do not remember now how many days I spent there. But when I left, I felt as though suddenly I was able to breathe again. The atmosphere had been too rarefied for me. I felt free, released, glad to be away, and yet guilty because of my gladness. I soon forgot my sense of guilt in work that was waiting for me. Already, although the paper was only a few months old, mail from all over the United States was almost more than three of us could handle, and people came to the door all the day long, and even far into the night.

A community was growing up. A community of the poor, who enjoyed being together, who felt that they were embarked on a great enterprise, who had a mission.

All of them understood the works of mercy—old-fashioned prayer books list them. The corporal ones are to feed the hungry; to give drink to the thirsty; to clothe the naked; to harbor the harborless; to ransom the captive; to visit the sick; to bury the dead. The spiritual works are to instruct the ignorant; to counsel the doubtful; to admonish sinners; to bear wrongs patiently; to forgive offenses willingly; to comfort the afflicted; to pray for the living and the dead.

Everyone understood, in his destitution, that voluntary poverty on the part of him who possessed some of this world's goods would enable him to practice these works of mercy—"at a personal sacrifice," Peter Maurin always added. Eric Gill said that Christ came to make the rich poor and the poor holy.

All of us began to have in some slight way Peter's philosophy of poverty. He told us how Proudhon wrote *The Philosophy of Poverty* and how Karl Marx read it and countered scornfully with *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Peter gave us little lectures about poverty and community as we sat at our meals. He indulged in the first

part of his program, these round-table discussions, twice a day. Not at breakfast, because we all went to Mass at different hours, at seven, eight or nine, and so broke our fast at different hours.

I did not think of retreats for a long time again. We were living a retreat, some of us said smugly. Others said scornfully that with all our talk of voluntary poverty, with shelters like our houses of hospitality and with farming communes, we were indeed fleeing to the fields, retreating from the world, living in ivory towers. I wanted to start a farming commune called Tower of Ivory, one of the titles of the Blessed Virgin in the litany dedicated to her.

The first time I heard about what came to be called *the retreat*, was some five years later. Maisie Ward, the wife and business partner of the publisher, Frank Sheed, was telling me of a retreat she had heard of in Canada given by Abbe Saey, in the heart of the slums. "He gives it for workers," she said. "They bring their own lunch and eat it right there in the church and share it with others who come. They spend the day in silence, walk the streets between conferences, go home at night, and come back the next day for more. People are thronging to it. It is an evangelical retreat. I am going to Montreal to make it."

The retreat was in French, and since I could not understand French I did not go. My friend Sister Peter Claver told me of a priest friend of hers who had made a retreat for priests in Baltimore, given by a Father Onesimus Lacouture, a French Canadian from Montreal who had influenced Abbe Saey. She told me that many who heard him changed their lives entirely. She had the retreat notes given to her by her confessor, and gave them to me to read.

I read them and was not much impressed. The written word did not have the life and vitality of the spoken word, and perhaps it was the personality of the retreat master that made the teaching so powerful, I thought. I preferred to go for my spiritual instruction, I told her, to the saints, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Teresa of Avila, St.

John of the Cross, St. Francis, and the Little Flower, as well as to the New Testament itself.

Another year passed before Sister Peter Claver came to visit us in New York with Father Pacifique Roy, a Josephite priest from Quebec who was then stationed in Baltimore. He had served as a missionary in Louisiana as well as in Canada, and he had been, he informed us, instrumental in having Father Lacouture give a retreat for priests at Baltimore a few years before.

We were sitting in the dining room having our morning coffee when Father Roy started to talk to us about the love of God and what it should mean in our lives. He began with the Sermon on the Mount, holding us spell-bound, so glowing was his talk, so heartfelt. People came and went, we were called to the telephone again and again, but still Father Roy went on talking to all who would listen. The men came in from the soup kettles in the kitchen which were being prepared for the soup line and stayed to listen, tables were set around us and the people came in and were fed and went out again, and still Father talked, and so the day went. It was like the story in the Gospels, when the two apostles were talking on the way to Emmaus, grieving and fearful and lamenting over the death of their Leader; suddenly a fellow traveler came along and began to explain the Scriptures, going as far as the town with them and even going to an inn to break bread with them. They knew Him then in the breaking of bread. They had said to each other, "Was not our heart burning within us, whilst he spoke in the way?"

Father Roy talked to us of nature and the supernatural, how God become man that man might become God, how we were under the obligation of putting off the old man and putting on Christ, how we had been made the sons of God, by the seed of supernatural life planted in us at our baptism, and of the necessity we were under to see that the seed grew and flourished. We had to aim at perfection; we had to be guided by the folly of the Cross.

He not only pointed out to us the obligation we were under by the vows we had taken at our baptism to put off the world, the flesh and the devil, but he pointed out the means to do this, by what he called acting always for the "supernatural motive"—"moteef," he pronounced it—in this way supernaturalizing all our actions of every day. If we did our works of mercy to be praised by men, or from pride and vanity and sense of power, then we had had our reward. If we did them for the love of God, in whose image man had been made, then God would reward us; then we were doing them for a supernatural motive. There was little freedom in this life, except in the realm of motive or intention. We could do things either because we were compelled to, or because we loved God and wanted to. And never mind, if we did not by our own sacrifice put off the old man and put on the new; God would see to it that we did so in the natural course of events, just as we grew in age, losing little by little our sense of life, our eyesight, our teeth, our hearing. "Oh yes, we would be stripped," he laughed gaily. "God so loved the world," he cried out with a thrill in his voice. God was that Hound of Heaven who would pursue us, who would not let us go.

His was the kind of talk to which all of us could listen, the men from the soup line, students on vacation or seminarians coming in to help for an afternoon. He had a stock of stories with which we were to become familiar and which he was never tired of telling, nor we indeed of hearing. Sometimes we had not gotten the point and it needed the tenth telling for us to understand, just as it was with Peter's points. As Peter always dealt with the things of this world, so Father Roy always dealt with the things of the next, but the two were interwoven; time and eternity were one. As St. Catherine said, "All the way to heaven is heaven," because He had said, "I am the way." We were like workers for a Utopia already living in their Utopia. We were dying and yet we lived. We were in sorrow yet rejoicing.

He liked to tell of a leper he visited in a hospital in

Canada, a huge Russian fellow who was suffering greatly during his slow death. He could not understand why God did this to him, the leper cried.

"I told him about God's love," Father Roy said. "I began with the dirt, and how the flower said to the dirt, 'How would you like to be like me, so pretty, so sweet, waving in the breeze?' And the dirt said, 'Oh, I would like that.' So the roots of the flower assimilated the dirt, and it became a flower. And then the rabbit came along and said to the flower, 'And how would you like to be like me, hopping around, playing in the fields?' And the flower said, 'Oh, yes, I would like to be able to move and to be like you.' So the rabbit assimilated the flower and it became rabbit. And then the man came and said to the rabbit, 'How would you like to be a man, to walk about, to think, to pray?' And the rabbit said, 'Oh, of course, I would like that!' So the hunter killed him and ate him. And do you know that leper grasped my hand, and he lifted his eyes full of tears to me, and he said, 'Oh, Father!' and there was such a depth of comprehension in the way he said it, that I cried too. 'Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him.' Oh yes, we must die to live; we've got to face it. It is easy to talk about this mystery of suffering but it is hard to take. But what am I talking about. Doesn't God give us strength and grace to bear everything?"

Some years later I read in Louis Fischer's *Life of Mahatma Gandhi* the old Indian poem,

"I died as a mineral and became a plant,
I died as a plant and became an animal,
I died as an animal and was a man.
What should I fear? When was I less by dying?"

The doctrine of assimilation is there too.

He certainly filled us with the spirit of joy while he talked. He told us how he had been pastor of a country parish in the bayou region, and how after he had made the retreat under Father Lacouture he had given up cigars, hunting and fishing. "Was I smoking for the love of

God, or for myself?" he asked. And he had had a passion for fishing. "I did not do it for utility," he said humbly.

Father Roy was stationed in Baltimore at that time, and it was but rarely that he was able to get to New York. So we often went to see him. He worked in a Negro parish as a curate, so he could not invite us to stay in the rectory. Our house of hospitality in Baltimore was started by John Doebele, Jim Rogan, and Jon Thornton, three college graduates, and Franklin Smith, who owned a truck and used to peddle sandwiches and doughnuts outside of factory gates. Smiddy, as we called him, would bring his surplus stock to help feed the soup line, but after he listened to Father Roy preach he decided it was not enough to give us the stale goods he could no longer sell. He decided to give himself and his truck to the work, and from then on he collected leftover food from hospitals and restaurants, furniture, and other goods to run the house. Many a time too he picked up sick men in the house and brought them to the hospital, using his little panel truck as an ambulance. He and the others often became vermin-ridden in performing the works of mercy.

Father Roy came to preach to us at the house. The big front room which was formerly a union hall was filled with unemployed longshoremen and seamen and construction workers, colored and white, drunk and sober, sitting on chairs and benches and along the wall on the floor when there were not enough chairs. We did not want the place to have the aspect of a mission, and we did not want to preach to men with empty stomachs. But we wanted to hear Father Roy ourselves and we used the only room we had, which had to accommodate the men in the house too when all the beds were taken.

We often listened to him to the tune of snoring guests. Men crouched and lay around the room in an abandonment of weariness, trying to sit up, propped against each other, against the wall, until sleep overcame them and they slid over against their fellows, their heads on one another's shoulders. And Father Roy talked on, in his

gently appealing way, of "the one thing necessary"—love. "Love is the measure by which we shall be judged," he quoted. He always emptied his pockets too of anything he could collect for us.

He had his own work to do of course, and it was in a poor parish with a poor school. There were only outdoor toilets (this in 1939 in Baltimore) and an old hall for recreation, and the parishioners were clamoring for a gymnasium. They openly grumbled at the fact that collections were taken for other parochial schools and nothing was done to improve theirs, so Father Roy began to plan. He came to the house of hospitality and begged some of the men to come to him to work for God. He assembled some carpenters, electricians, plumbers, ditchdiggers, and with the help of these men who lived in the basement of the parish house and were served meals by Mr. Green the janitor, he built a fine gymnasium and shower room. Half of the men would work a few weeks and then succumb to drink, Father put them to bed and cajoled, entreated, rebuked and nursed them back to sanity. When they had recovered, the others were likely to be prostrated. Thus the work was accomplished by the lame, the halt, the blind, the offscouring of all.

In addition to saying Mass every day, preaching, teaching, and doing heavy manual labor (for he directed and joined the men in their work) Father Roy gave us "days of recollection." Usually we had these days at a Dominican convent or a Visitation convent outside of Baltimore. He urged fasting upon us. Prayer and fasting always went together. He said, so he put us on bread and water for the day. It was not literally bread and water. After Mass in the morning we had black coffee, with no sugar in it, and a few slices of bread. At noon we had bread and water. In between we sat and listened to conferences on the love of God, some of us from the house of hospitality, some readers of the paper, students, teachers, workers and unemployed. In the evening we went back to Baltimore to the basement of his rectory and were regaled by Mr. Green with a delicious dish of roast groundhog.

Those were beautiful days. It was as though we were listening to the gospel for the first time. We saw all things anew. There was a freshness about everything as though we were in love, as indeed we were. After a day of recollection with Father Roy we went back to New York or Philadelphia refreshed, and "went for forty days and forty nights," like the prophets, on that food. It was good bread. Indeed it was strong meat.

Father Roy hitchhiked often, carrying with him literature by Abbé Longpré, Saint Louis de Montfort, Father Caussade, St. Angela of Foligno, Father Lacouture, the Gospels. In trains and buses he always met someone who was hungering for the Word.

"It was very Providential we met," he ended his stories. Providential was one of his favorite words. He tried to make us cultivate abandonment to Divine Providence.

One time, hitchhiking between Washington and Baltimore, he obtained a ride with several priests who were probably aghast at seeing their fellow cleric hitchhiking, thinking that some accident or illness had overtaken him. He too was abashed on getting into the car to find himself in the company of a bishop. But, "it was very Providential," and even to these he preached the Gospel, the good news, the story of the love of God for men, and how, joyful to relate, we are even now the sons of God and the implications of this profound truth! What a difference it made in our way of looking at other men, and our life here on earth.

His favorite stories, which he told over and over, were the encounter of our Lord with the rich young man and His telling him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor"; "He who does not hate father, mother, sister and brother, cannot be my disciple"; "Unless the seed fall into the ground and die, itself remaineth alone"; and, "Take up your cross daily and follow me."

The twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew was his text for the house of hospitality.

He always spoke with such enthusiasm, with such joy, that one could well understand the rejoicing in tribulation that St. Paul talked about. It was just another of those paradoxes, which needed to be experienced to be understood, and one began to experience it in hearing Father Roy.

It was the natural law as well as the supernatural law, he always pointed out. Another favorite tale, which he used not without guile, was from his experience with a pastor who needed a hundred thousand dollars to build a school. (These are general terms, because of course a half million would be needed now.)

"He had only a thousand dollars," Father Roy would state sadly, "and he knew that was not enough to do anything with. So he sowed it. He threw it into the field as the farmer plants the wheat. He gave it to the poor. And lo and behold, someone presented him with a hundred-fold, a hundred thousand dollars!"

There was another story, to bring the same point more into the realm of our experience. "Suppose you want to go to California and it costs a hundred dollars. You have fifteen. It is not enough. So give it away, give it to the poor. Then you suddenly have twenty-five, and that is not enough and the only thing to do is to give it away too. Even seventy-five. That is not enough. Tell the Lord you want more. Throw it away recklessly. You will get back your hundredfold. You will get what you need. Maybe it will come in graces. Maybe it will cover your spiritual needs, not just your physical. But sow, sow! As ye sow, so shall ye reap. He who sows sparingly, reaps sparingly."

Father Roy worked on this principle when he needed funds for materials. He came to us, explained his need, gave us what his pocketbook contained, and the materials somehow arrived by the time he returned home.

He allowed himself an "out," we would tease him, when he said perhaps the reward would be in spiritual gifts, not material. "But the good Lord knows what you

need," he assured us. "Maybe you should not go to California. Maybe the train would be wrecked."

The same principle always worked. If we are rushed for time, sow time and we will reap time. Go to church and spend a quiet hour in prayer. You will have more time than ever and your work will get done. Sow time with the poor. Sit and listen to them, give them your time lavishly. You will reap time a hundredfold. Sow kindness and you will reap kindness. Sow love, you will reap love. "Where there is no love, if you put love, you will take out love"—it is again St. John of the Cross.

But Father Roy did get tired, of course. He could give two days of conferences, or perhaps three, but sometimes he would give the same one over with the same enthusiasm and not realize he had repeated himself. He was best at impromptu discussions, at chance meetings.

He antagonized many, as once when he went to a hospital to visit a poor crippled Sister, who had a radio by her bedside. "Sow everything; take up your cross; do not try to escape from it," he urged her. "Mortification, penance, that is what we all need. You are being mortified; you are dying little by little, but not fast enough. Die to the things of sense. Don't use that talcum there; you are indulging your nose. And your ears with the radio, and your taste with that pudding. And when you get rid of mortifying all your exterior senses, there are the interior senses, the memory, the understanding and the will. You should be mortifying your judgment now in regard to me." When he was rebuffed, when he was evicted, he hung his head meekly.

When Father spoke of mortifying, he spoke of putting to death, using the literal meaning of the word. We have been baptized in Christ's death, he reminded us. We are buried with Christ and we will rise with Christ; we must seek the things which are above, not the things which are below. Gospel texts flowed from his lips, but his opponents were not convinced they had their countertexts.

"Even the devil can quote scripture." "He is a Jansen-

ist." "Grace builds on nature, and he would put nature to death."

I have read Martin Scheeben, that great theologian, and my heart and mind give ready assent to his glowing and beautiful words on the grandeur of the natural man, of natural virtues, of natural life. I could see how theologians would seize upon Father Roy's words to brand him a heretic.

Once a priest said to us that no one gets up in the pulpit without promulgating a heresy. He was joking, of course, but what I suppose he meant was that truth was so pure, so holy, that it was hard to emphasize one aspect of the truth without underestimating another, that we did not see things as a whole, but in part, through a glass darkly, as St. Paul said. I am sure that as a layman, I could be branded for inexactitude of expression over and over again, and I take that risk month after month as I write in *The Catholic Worker*, and as I speak at gatherings and school groups.

Of course Father Roy was never satisfied with his own presentation of what he called "*the retreat*," differentiating it from all other retreats, and all but branding them as feeble caricatures of the gospel teaching.

"The man who can really give this retreat is Father John J. Hugo," he told me once, and I immediately set out to find Father Hugo. He was a young priest of the diocese of Pittsburgh who amplified the retreat notes of Father Lacouture into a book entitled *Applied Christianity* which has been published with an imprimatur of the archdiocese of New York and which has gone into many editions and been studied by Catholics all over the world. He himself has written a history of this retreat movement in a book called *The Sign of Contradiction*. This was widely circulated among other priests and was regarded as an extreme example of self-criticism, that is, criticism of the clergy in general. At the time that I met him he had written little, but taught and preached a good deal. He was teaching religion in a girls' college in Pittsburgh, and led a street-preaching band in the Hill district of that

city. He and Father Louis Farina, who had charge of an orphanage in Oakmont on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, had begun to give the retreat during the summer months at the orphanage when the classrooms could be turned into dormitories and the gymnasium used as a conference room. The Sisters at the orphanage were quite as enthusiastic as the priests and willingly took care of retreatants in addition to the hundred and fifty children who were in their charge.

The first retreat I attended at Oakmont was at the end of a short speaking trip. As I went from Cleveland to Detroit, to South Bend, to Chicago, to Milwaukee, I gathered other members of our Catholic Worker family from our houses of hospitality. Representatives from the New York and the Baltimore houses also came.

In Pittsburgh there had been a slight difference in opinion as to what true Franciscanism was. A few of the young people broke off from the main house of hospitality, which was then housed in a former orphanage on Tannehill Street and seemed to them to be too organized, to start a little house of their own in another section. I disagreed with the small group who felt themselves to be the *spirituals* of the movement, the perfectionists. At St. Francis' house they were more truly poor than those at St. Joseph's, they felt. They didn't want to make the retreat because they lived a retreat—they were superior. But they ended up by coming at midnight, after imbibing at a few taverns along the way, but the important thing is that they came. There is a Bohemianism of the religious life among young people as well as Bohemianism in the labor movement, and it too smacks of sentimentality. The gesture of being dirty because the outcast is dirty, of drinking because he drinks, of staying up all night and talking, because that is what one's guests from the streets want to do, in participating in his sin from a prideful humility, this is self-deception indeed!

The five days of complete silence during the retreat were a feast indeed. Every day we had four conferences of an hour each, and after each conference we went to

the chapel to pray. Father Hugo was a brilliant teacher and one could see he was taking great joy in his work.

"He who says he has done enough has already perished," he began ominously, quoting the words of St. Augustine. We shivered. How often had we settled back and said that we had done all we could; nothing more could be expected of us.

I have the retreat notes in two little notebooks and I still enjoy taking them to church with me and reading them over for meditation. "Behold I will allure her and will lead her into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart." These were comforting words, these words from the book of Osee, the words of the prophet who married a harlot and loved her to such folly that when she was faithless to him he said sadly, "She did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold." She thought they were gifts from her lovers.

This love, this foolishness of love, illustrated in the book of Osee (Hosea) in the Old Testament and in the story of the prodigal son in the New, this folly of the Cross, was the sum and substance of the retreat. "O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet!" "How precious is the mercy of God; the children of men take refuge under the shadow of thy wings; they are filled with the bounteousness of thy house, and thou givest them to drink of the torrent of thy delights. For with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light we see light."

We were indeed allured at first. Those first meditations were not the usual meditations on the four last things, heaven, hell, death and the judgment which are given at missions in parish churches. There was not much talk of sin in this retreat. Rather there was talk of the good and the better. The talk was of the choice we had to make and not that between good and evil. We have been given a share in the divine life; we have been raised to a supernatural level; we have been given power to become the sons of God.

Aristotle, Father Hugo explained, wished us to live according to our intellect, but "the just man lives by faith."

We had to conform our lives according to faith—that was the teaching of the Jews before Christ. All of the eleventh chapter in the Epistle to the Hebrews is about faith. Abraham had faith when he was told that he was to have a son and the son was to inherit the land. His wife Sara stood in the tent and laughed because she was past the age when women bear children. Even when Abraham was told to sacrifice his son, a mad act, a criminal act, incomprehensible, he had the faith to obey.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Faith that works through love is the mark of the supernatural life. God always gives us a chance to show our preference for Him. With Abraham it was to sacrifice his only son. With me it was to give up my married life with Forster. You do these things blindly, not because it is your natural inclination—you are going against nature when you do them—but because you wish to live in conformity with the will of God.

Love is a commandment, Father Hugo said. It is a choice, a preference. If we love God with our whole hearts, how much heart have we left? If we love with our whole mind and soul and strength, how much mind and soul and strength have we left? We must live this life now. Death changes nothing. If we do not learn to enjoy God now we never will. If we do not learn to praise Him and thank Him and rejoice in Him now, we never will.

Fearful thoughts, but glorious too! Not like that retreat of Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which I had read many years before. Grace is a share in the divine life and this idea was the keystone of the retreat. We have been raised above ourselves by baptism, and the law of this supernatural life is love, a love which demands renunciation. This is the official meditation during the paschal season. "Seek the things that are above. . . . For you are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God." All this is the starting point of Christianity.

Body and soul constitute human nature. The body is no less good than the soul. In mortifying the natural we

must not injure the body or the soul. We are not to destroy but to transform it, as iron is transformed in the fire. Most of our life is unimportant, filled with trivial things from morning till night. But when it is transformed by love it is of interest even to the angels.

"Although human nature is essentially good it is infected by original sin, which is forgiven at baptism, but the effects will remain in the soul. We are prone to evil. We have a bias toward evil." These are notes which I took.

In a Jesuit magazine which I read recently there is an article on original sin in which this statement is made:

"Man, considered simply as natural man, is as whole today, in intellect and will, as was man regarded in his purely natural endowment when he came from the creative hand of God. In other words, original sin left man in no worse condition on the purely human level of his mind and will, than he was before Adam cast his momentous decision against God. . . . Adam was created not only in a state of natural perfection, but was elevated to the sonship of God by sanctifying grace. . . . Adam's sin did not wreck his nature as such. We are no worse off now than we would have been if God had never elevated Adam to be His adopted son, with this exception; we *ought* to be born with sanctifying grace, and we are not; and so we are born in a state displeasing to God, a state of sin. . . . The statement in the elementary catechism most of us have studied is 'our nature was corrupted by the sin of our first parents, which darkened our understanding, weakened our will and left in us a strong inclination to evil.' The doctrine taught by the familiar catechism of our childhood is of course true. But the truth admits of better wording; and the recent revision of this catechism puts the matter more clearly; 'The chief punishments of Adam which we inherit through original sin are: death, suffering, ignorance, and a strong inclination to sin.' "

Such a discussion as this in theological journals sometimes becomes acrimonious and such a controversy burst out about the retreat. In Canada, Father Lacouture was charged with inexactitude of expression, causing division among the clergy and causing people to go to extremes in the business of mortification.

When this accusation was brought to the attention of Bishop Hugh Boyle in whose diocese Father Hugo and other young priests who gave the retreat belonged, he said glumly, "I wish someone around here were going to extremes." Nevertheless, within a few years Father Hugo and the others who gave the retreat were refused permission to give it any longer, and were told to take care of their parish duties.

It was the old controversy of nature and grace, and not being a theologian I cannot write about it. I heard some lay theologians talk about the dangerous teaching in the *Imitation of Christ* in Book Three, Chapter Fifty-three, on the "divers motions of Nature and Grace," and yet on the other hand, Pope Pius XI called it "that incomparable work."

On this side of the Atlantic controversy began and spread through articles in the *Ecclesiastical Review* attacking Father Hugo's teaching. In France there was controversy about the teaching of another Jesuit, Father de Lubac, whom we had read with enthusiasm as a biographer of Proudhon, *The Un-Marxian Socialist*, and as the author of *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*. It seemed a wonderful thing to me that priests and laity could still become excited about points of doctrine, about nature and the supernatural, nature and grace, about forces, spiritual capacities far more powerful than the atom bomb.

Not only were many of the young priests told they could no longer give the retreat but two members of an order who gave it were sent to Egypt and the Holy Land, another to Nicaragua, and Father Lacouture himself was sent to an Indian reservation in northern New York where he could administer the sacraments but not

teach. He is there today, happy and at peace, sowing, as he terms it, his own interior senses, the memory, the understanding, the will.

"Unless the seed fall into the ground and die," he reminds us.

To us the retreat was the good news. We made it as often as we could, and refreshed ourselves with days of recollection.

The last year of the war, we decided to turn one of our farms into a retreat house where people could come to study and pray, and begin to realize what it meant to be a son of God, what responsibilities such a position entailed. If people did not go away from the retreat examining their consciences as to the work they did in the world, their material goods, their attachments, then it was a failure. Such a retreat should be like shock treatment, we thought, putting the "old man" to death, bringing us to new life.

Our farms at Easton at this time housed two families and one or two single people. One family living on the upper farm was headed by a man who in himself held two or three heresies, we thought. The heresy of the family, the heresy of the priesthood of the laity, the heresy of the relations of men and women.

We had said the family was the primary unit of society so Victor wished all the work of *The Catholic Worker* to center around the family. The funds should not be used to feed the poor, but to re-establish the family on the land. The man was the head of the house and he emphasized the priesthood of the laity. He made another layman the spiritual adviser of the little community setup and this man imposed penances and insisted on strict obedience. His attitude toward women was that the men were to sit like judges at the gates and the women were to be the valiant women of the Old Testament, hewers of wood and drawers of water, tillers of the field, and clothiers of the family. This position was carried to such an extreme on the upper farm that the women were forbidden to speak unless spoken to, and were compelled to knock

on the doors of even their own kitchens and dining rooms if there were men present.

Trying to bear with the situation on the upper farm, we started the retreat house on the lower farm, and began having retreats every few months.

Young priests from Pittsburgh, from a Minnesota diocese, and others from the East came to spend time with us. Often they had heavy parish duties and even their vacations were taken up by their own retreats and study. One from Minnesota flew to New York after Sunday morning Mass, began giving our retreat Sunday night, ending it Friday night, returning on Saturday to hear confessions in his own parish.

These were priests who said Mass perfectly, prepared their sermons, "enlightened their minds, inflamed their hearts" by prayer and spiritual reading, and we caught fire from them.

Of course this could not go on. Those who gave us the retreat were given in turn chaplaincies of hospitals or other duties which made it impossible for them to get away. For the last few years, we have not been able to obtain more than one or two priests who could give the course of instruction as outlined by Father Lacouture and Father Hugo. But retreats, given by other priests, go on.

We did not remain at the Easton farm. Life there became too difficult. I have always felt that we had to be most careful about the articles which we printed in the paper. Once when I looked out the farmhouse window during an especially crowded time and saw some foot-sore travelers coming along the road and sighed, "I suppose they are coming here," one young worker said severly, "You should not write the things you do unless you mean them." In other words—do not write about hospitality unless we are willing to assume the obligations such writings bring with it.

I had recently written a commendatory article about the sit-down householders in Great Britain, who were moving into empty houses and taking possession of them

for want of homes. Within the month, we had several experiences which enabled us to take stock of our position.

One group of young men had taken an apartment in our neighborhood in New York and furnished it, to live near us. I remarked to them jokingly one evening that since they were single and could live with us, if a family came they would be forced by their own generous feelings to give the place up to those in need. At once a family arrived asking for help. The young men responded though I think with misgivings. And a week later, the family moved away, taking the furnishings with them.

In Cleveland there was a similar incident. William Gauchat, who headed the house of hospitality, furnished an apartment for single women in need, and a married couple arriving first, were sheltered there. But when Bill wanted to put a few single women into the empty bedrooms, the couple announced that they had possession and refused to allow them entrance.

Our guests know that we will not call upon the police to evict them, that we are trying to follow the dear Lord's teachings, "If anyone take your coat, let go your cloak also to him. . . . Give to him that asks of you and from him that would borrow, turn not away. You have heard that it has been said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your father who is in heaven who makes his sun to rise upon the good and the bad and rains upon the just and the unjust."

When another family came to Maryfarm, we explained that we were trying to open a retreat house and that we did not have room for them. It was the family of one of our own willful leaders who "loved God and did as he pleased." He did not wish to remain on a farm belonging to his father, where he was forced to work too hard. He and his wife refused to listen and unpacked their things to stay with us. First they took over the lower farmhouse. After a few conflicts due to their possessing them-

selves of retreat house goods (as common goods) they moved to the upper farm to join Victor.

For the following year they continued their guerrilla tactics from the upper farm, coming down to make raids on the retreat house food and furnishings, explaining to retreatants that they were true Catholic Workers and that the retreat house was a perversion of the movement.

If they had worked while making these contentions and so won respect they might have won adherents to their cause. As it was they were classed as a lunatic fringe by our retreatants and when the men from the upper farm came down to indoctrinate our visitors, leaving their wives to the work on the land and with the children, they did not win a hearing. They allowed their goats to run loose to eat the young orchards that had been put in, and this destruction was the final note that brought the situation to a crisis. We decided that if after speaking to one's brother and admonishing him, as St. Paul advised, he refused to listen, then it was time to remove ourselves from him. We deeded the small upper farm to our troublesome families who were living there and sold the lower farm to a neighbor who had been living in a rented house and was looking for shelter. We did not ask a down payment or interest on the mortgage, but arranged that he should make monthly payments like rent to a lawyer friend of ours, who accumulated them for us to make a payment once a year on another farm which we purchased with the help of friends.

The first farm had cost \$1,250 for twenty-seven acres; the adjoining which we sold cost \$4,000. The new farm we purchased cost \$16,000. Miraculously, we were given \$10,000 by friends to continue our retreat house work, all the money coming in within a month from a half dozen of our readers.

Our New York retreat farm is five miles west of Newburgh, New York, and is also called Maryfarm Retreat House. Retreatants, including family groups, come for week ends or discussion weeks. Families have vacationed in the barn. Families have come to make retreats together

and the place has become a haven of peace in spite of the nearness of Stewart Field down the road and the jet planes overhead.

Usually the "family" there is made up of more than a dozen people, with men coming off the highway for meals and a place to sleep. They, too, often stay for a retreat or to rest up on their way to the mountains to look for work in the resort hotels.

Some farming is done; vegetables are raised for the table, and there are goats, rabbits and chickens in one of the barns. These are a poor man's animals. We don't make ends meet; there is no use keeping accounts. Some retreatants leave something to pay for themselves, and some leave enough to pay for another besides themselves. We always have debts, of course, and there is a mortgage on the farm.

But we never have more than we can care for; we are never overwhelmed as we are in New York by the magnitude of the work to be done. In the cities it is as though we lived in concentration camps. Maryfarm is an oasis in a desert.

It is not only for others that I must have these retreats. It is because I too am hungry and thirsty for the bread of the strong. I too must nourish myself to do the work I have undertaken; I too must drink at these good springs so that I may not be an empty cistern and unable to help others.

"WAR IS THE HEALTH OF THE STATE"

□ One Christmas at the close of World War II, we received a card from the Rochester group saying that they had liked *The Catholic Worker* much better before the pacifists got hold of it. Another letter came from Boston, from an elderly worker who had been responsible for the first house of hospitality in Boston. She too reproached me for the extremism of our revolutionary pacifist position. She was a good trade unionist and was thinking in terms of the immediate steps to be taken, while we tried to keep the vision of a new social order, brought about by peaceful means.

It struck me then how strange a thing it was; here we had been writing about pacifism for fifteen years and members of two of our groups were just beginning to realize what it meant.

We had been pacifist in class war, race war, in the Ethiopian War, in the Spanish Civil War, all through World War II, as we are now during the Korean War. We had spoken in terms of the Sermon on the Mount and all of our readers were familiar enough with that. We had lost subscriptions and bundle orders, but these cancellations came from those who frankly disagreed with us and the matter was settled at once.

But there were a very great many who had seemed to agree with us who did not realize for years that *The Catholic Worker* position implicated them; if they believed the things we wrote, they would be bound, sooner or later, to make decisions personally and to act upon them.

Union workers in steel plants, auto and airplane factories—many in industry and business would have to find other jobs, jobs not tied up with the war effort. And

where could they get them? If they worked in the garment factories, they would have to fill government orders for uniforms. Mills turned out blankets, parachutes. Raising food, building houses, baking bread—whatever you did you kept the wheels of industrial capitalism moving, and industrial capitalism kept the wheels moving on war orders. You could not live without compromise. Teachers sold war stamps and bonds. Children were asked to bring aluminum pots and scrap metal to school. The Pope asked that war be kept out of the schoolroom, but there it was.

We wrote as much as we could on the subject, and Father John J. Hugo wrote articles and pamphlets—"The Immorality of Conscription," "Catholics Can Be Conscientious Objectors," "The Weapons of the Spirit," "The Gospel of Peace." The last two were printed as *Catholic Worker* pamphlets under the imprimatur of the Archdiocese of New York.

In Europe, Father Stratman, a Belgian Dominican, wrote *The Church and War and Peace and the Clergy*, and Father Ude of Austria wrote a monumental book, "*Thou Shalt Not Kill.*" Only the first two appeared in English. All of these set forth our stand.

In addition to the theological articles in our own paper, many young men wrote of war and peace. The most lively articles we published were those of Ammon Hennacy, Christian anarchist, a modern Thoreau in his monthly account of his life on the land. He began with a series on his term, largely spent in solitary confinement, in Atlanta Penitentiary during World War I, where he met Alexander Berkman and studied American history and anarchism with him. Ammon had been a Socialist before he was won by the personalist approach of Berkman. Forced to rely on himself, he recognized the importance of beginning with oneself, starting here and now, and not waiting for someone else to start the revolution. He became a pacifist even in the class war and he came to see the dangers of the modern state, and the inefficiency and waste of bureaucracy.

Reading the Bible while he was in solitary confinement, he was completely won by the Sermon on the Mount and all the teachings of Jesus. Upon reading Tolstoi he recognized himself as a Christian anarchist and from then on, Tolstoi, Gandhi and Jesus became his teachers. Organized religion, as he calls it, he rejects.

"He has seen so great a light, it has blinded him," the rector of a seminary said to me after reading his articles.

(Ammon is not the only non-Catholic contributor to *The Catholic Worker*. Fritz Eichenberg, a Quaker artist, contributes many illustrations, great in their understanding and compassion.)

Ammon's articles were always personal, since he wrote of what he knew, himself and his own experience. His life in jail, his work on dairy farms in Colorado and New Mexico, and on truck farms in Arizona have constituted a moving series about "Life at Hard Labor" and show how a man can live without compromise, and yet earn a living. For years he has paid no income tax. He worked by the day at the "stoop labor" the Mexicans usually performed, at irrigating, at ditchdigging, wood chopping, cotton picking.

He has supported himself and his two daughters, sending both through Northwestern University and in addition to his backbreaking work and his writing, he has found time to sell *The Catholic Worker* at churches and public meetings every week.

He has fasted and prayed for peace; he has picketed the tax collector's office twice a year. For the last few years on the anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb he has fasted as penance for six days, picketing the Internal Revenue office at Phoenix while he fasted, and distributing literature. Ammon considers himself a propagandist, an agitator, a one-man revolution. I doubt that he has ever considered himself a sociologist or an anthropologist, yet he could be classed in these categories too. His articles on the Indians of the Southwest, especially the Hopi, who are anarchists and pacifist, are of vital interest.

Ammon is fifty-eight, a tall lank Ohioan of tremendous

physical strength and endurance. For all of us at the Catholic Worker headquarters, he epitomizes the positive pacifist. He is trying to change conditions that bring about wars, and as he does not accept from Caesar, he does not render to Caesar. With all his absolutism and certitude, he is friendly and lovable, truly looking upon all as his brothers, overcoming opposition by understanding and affection.

On the other hand, Bob Ludlow, one of the editors of the paper, a convert to the Catholic Church, has been the theorist of our pacifism for the past five years. Son of a Scranton coal miner, educated by the Christian Brothers, he was converted by reading Newman. All his life he has been a student and teacher, and knows little of manual labor. When we have gotten him to work a few hours in our asparagus patch or to mend a leaky faucet, he has felt triumphant for weeks. He has cared for the babies of one of our Catholic Worker families, however, sitting helplessly in the middle of the kitchen while they circled like wild savages around him, and he has walked for miles on picket lines.

During the war, he served as a conscientious objector in the Rosewood Training School at Owings Mills, Maryland, working twelve hours a day, seven days a week, among human monstrosities and idiots as well as "children" with varying degrees of feeble-mindedness. Once every month he had an accumulated four days off which he spent with us in New York, helping us to catch up on correspondence and filing. This went on for three years.

Since the end of the war he has written a monthly article which has aroused our readers to the consciousness that they also are involved in the duty of making moral judgments, that they must begin to think, not only of the pacifism of the Sermon on the Mount, but of the natural law.

Robert is doctrinaire and dogmatic, sometimes belligerent in tone so that we find ourselves in hot water and are forced to reconsider and re-present our position. And

yet he is the mildest of mortals, meek and disciplined in his personal life, ready to withdraw or subside, to hold his position alone, if need be, accepting without question the authority of the Church, yet determined to call attention to, and take advantage of, the freedom in the Church to discuss, question, and clarify the stand various theologians have taken on finance capitalism, the state, and on war and the morality of the means used in war.

His writings have aroused the conscience, have spot-lighted attention on the grave questions of freedom and authority.

In the last generation, Chesterton, Belloc, Eric Gill and Father Vincent McNabb were the great distributists who opposed the servile state, the "providential state" as Pius XII recently called it. Of the four only Eric Gill was a pacifist and anarchist. The others would have feared the word, "anarchist," and understood it only in its popular connotation. I myself would prefer the word "libertarian," as less apt to offend. But I do not like to censor the writings of the editors. Peter used to say, "It makes to think." Peter himself liked to shock people, and one article of his entitled "Feed the Poor, Starve the Bankers" did lose us a very good friend. He called himself an anarchist, but privately however. He liked the term Christian Communist, but when that too was misunderstood, he called himself a communitarian.

Bob's anarchism, however, has provoked much thought and has forced many a student to realize that there were other positions on the left besides that of the Marxist.

When correspondents ask him how we can do without government, he says:

"Both among Catholics and anarchists in general a great deal of misunderstanding comes about by a confusion of the terms State, government and society. Father Luigi Sturzo's book *Inner Laws of Society* is the best Catholic treatment of the subject I have read. He brings out the point that the State is only *one* form of government. When you analyze what anarchists advocate (par-

ticularly the anarcho-syndicalists) it really boils down to the advocacy of decentralized self-governing bodies. It *is* a form of government.

"The confusion results because some anarchist writers use the term government as synonymous with the term State and will make the categorical statement that they do not believe in government, meaning by that the State.

"The State is government by *representation* (when it is a democracy) but there is no reason why a Catholic must believe that people must be governed by representatives—the Catholic is free to believe one way or the other as is evident from St. Thomas' treatment of law in the *Summa Theologiae*. In Question 90, Art. 3, St. Thomas states: A law, properly speaking, regards first and foremost the order to the common good. Now to order anything to the common good belongs *either* to the whole people, or to someone who is the viceregent of the whole people. Hence the making of law belongs either to the whole people or to a public personage who has care of the whole people; for in all other matters the directing of anything to the end concerns him to whom the end belongs.

"Anarchists believe that the *whole* people composing a community should take care of what governing is to be done rather than have a distant and centralized State do it. You can see from the quotation from St. Thomas there is nothing heretical about such a belief. It certainly is possible for a Christian to be an anarchist. As to government proceeding from sin, St. Augustine distinguishes between coercive government and directive government. The former he says is the result of sin. The latter is not, as man is a social being. It could be said that anarchists advocate directive government (mutual aid) but reject coercive government (the State).

"Our Lord taught us to pray 'Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven'—in other words the nearer earthly government approximates what things are in heaven the more Christian it is. I do believe—whether it can be realized or not—that the anarchist society ap-

proaches nearer to this ideal than do other forms of government. As the Christian lives in hope so may we set this as the ideal, towards which we work even if it seems as impractical as Calvary."

Bob is one of the most disciplined members of the Catholic Worker family. He needs no rules, no laws—he imposes a very rigid regime on himself. Like Peter Maurin, he follows a rule and it seldom varies. He attends seven o'clock Mass, which means rising a little after six, walks a mile to the post office for the mail and a mile back. His breakfast is a bowl of cereal. From nine until five he is at his desk, aside from half an hour after lunch when he goes to his room to say the Little Office of the Blessed Mother. In the evening he reads from six to ten-thirty, goes out for coffee and a short walk, and is in bed at eleven. You can set your clock by him. Over his desk hangs a picture of the Blessed Virgin and a newsprint photograph of Gandhi.

In stating the Catholic Worker pacifist position, Bob puts it this way:

"The question of pacifism may be treated from the natural or supernatural viewpoint. From the natural viewpoint it derives its validity from reason, and natural morality, which is derived from the nature of man, is susceptible of development in that we understand more its implications as we understand more the nature of man. From an ethical and psychological standpoint it seems evident that pacifism, as exemplified in non-violent procedure, is more reasonable than is violent procedure and therefore is more in accord with man's nature which differs from sub-human nature precisely in that man is capable of rationality.

"As the Catholic religion is not in opposition to nature but rather completes and confirms nature it would seem then that there could be no opposition between a pacifism basing its validity on man's reason and the official teaching of the Church.

"The supernatural viewpoint takes into consideration the revelation of Christ. Here we find that, in the early

Church, there was division of opinion. Some of the early saints and Fathers were definitely pacifist. All were critical of the army. The general rule of the early Church was that one who was baptized should not join the army. Those who were already in the army when baptized were admonished to shed no blood even in a war. So there has been a tradition of pacifism in the Church, though this has fallen into obscurity and awaits doctrinal development to become explicit. Some of this tradition survives in canon law wherein the clergy are forbidden to shed blood. The increasing horror and immorality of modern war which, because of the means used, necessitate the slaying of the innocent, should serve to recall this latent pacifist tradition so that the Sermon on the Mount will be seen to confirm and sanction nonviolent procedure which is already sanctioned by reason.

"If it is remarked that pacifism places too much of a burden on the ordinary Catholic it can then be replied in truth that it places not so much a burden as does Catholic sexual morality with its day to day difficulties and the heroism it requires of many in these days. And yet the Church will not compromise in this regard. It would seem that the day must come when we refuse to compromise on this matter of war—otherwise we will sink to sub-human bestiality and will most certainly stray far from the spirit of Christ."

What would you do if an armed maniac were to attack you, your child, your mother? How many times have we heard this. Restrain him, of course, but not kill him. Confine him if necessary. But perfect love casts out fear and love overcomes hatred. All this sounds trite but experience is not trite.

On one occasion an armed maniac did try to kill Arthur Sheehan, one of our editors during the war. A victim of World War I, who had already assaulted several other men in the house and almost broken my wrist one day when I tried to turn off the radio in the kitchen, took a large breadknife and a crucifix and announced he

was going to kill Arthur. Another woman and I seized him, forcing him to drop the knife. We could not hold him, however, and after he had hurled a gallon can of vegetables at Arthur and smashed a hole in the wall, we restrained him long enough to allow Arthur to escape. We called the police and asked that Harry be confined to Bellevue for observation, but since we would not bring charges against him, the hospital released him the next day. Later we persuaded them to keep him for a month in the psychiatric ward. He was returned to the hospital, but at the end of thirty days he was out again, and continued to eat on our breadline during the war. Some time later we heard that he had shipped out on an oil tanker.

There were many other incidents that would have resulted in violence if moral force had not been substituted for coercion, which would have resulted in greater trouble.

David Mason was another pacifist member of our group. David came from Philadelphia, where he had been one of the leaders of the house of hospitality there, to work during the war in our New York house. A large stout man, forty-five at that time, with white hair and a peculiar short-stepping gait as though his legs were not properly matched to his big body, he was a paternal figure around the place when most of the young men were called. He served as one of the editors of the paper, took care of the mail, wrote articles, cooked meals. In fact, he was cooking the evening the FBI came to pick him up for failure to report.

I was away on a speaking trip at the time but I can imagine the picture. Two men drove up to the house at Mott Street and stalked in looking very official.

"Where is David Mason?"

"Upstairs in the kitchen. Shall we get him?"

"No, we will get him," and the two agents went through the long hall, the courtyard, up the stairs, and found David, an apron around his large middle, making gelatine for the evening dessert.

"And that night we had gelatine at the Federal House

of Detention," he said ruefully, "and it was like leather, not as good as mine."

They kept him only a few weeks, much to his regret. He was obviously not the physical material our infantry needs. "I wanted to write a book," he said as they released him. He came back to the soup kitchen and editorial office instead. Arthur Sheehan, who was exempt as a former tuberculosis patient, is now working for CARE and David for a new Catholic daily.

Younger men, such as Tom Sullivan from our Chicago house, who went to war and served in the Pacific, and Jack English, formerly of our Cleveland house, another veteran, will not call themselves pacifist, though Tom is an editor of our pacifist paper. Tom was brought up on the West Side of Chicago and his heart is always with the underdog. He would scoff at the idea of being called a mystic, but I can only explain his attitude toward war on mystical grounds. He agrees with the condemnation of the means used in modern war. He probably would never lift a hand to injure another man, but his attitude is that if other men have to suffer in the war, he will suffer with them.

He poses the question—how explain the two thousand years of Christianity during which time Crusades were preached, wars were fought with the blessing of the Church, and warriors were canonized?

"I do not consider myself strong enough to court martyrdom," he says, "and that is what it means if atheistic communism wins out. Since nobody seems to be using the spiritual weapons you are always talking about, we may have to use the material ones."

He says nothing about means and ends. He is leaving that to the theologians. And his is the general opinion of the rank and file in the Church today.

It is a matter of grief to me that most of those who are Catholic Workers are not pacifists, but I can see too how good it is that we always have this attitude represented among us. We are not living in an ivory tower.

Jack English suffered more in the war than the others.

A gunner on a bomber, he was shot down and spent a year in a Rumanian prison camp. He was rescued by the Russians, only to go through the blitz in London. Jack has theologian friends whose opinions keep him away from the extreme pacifist position.

Tony Aratari, also from a prison camp, Charlie McCormick, Joe Monroe, members of the Catholic Worker group, and younger men in their early twenties just with us to help as long as the draft board permits, talk the issue over constantly. Can there be a just war? Can the conditions laid down by St. Thomas ever be fulfilled? What about the morality of the use of the atom bomb? What does God want me to do? And what am I capable of doing? Can I stand out against state and Church? Is it pride, presumption, to think I have the spiritual capacity to use spiritual weapons in the face of the most gigantic tyranny the world has ever seen? Am I capable of enduring suffering, facing martyrdom? And alone?

Again the long loneliness to be faced.

PETER'S DEATH

□ "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," and the details of such a death are precious.

Plato said: "Other people are not likely to be aware that those who pursue philosophy aright study nothing but dying and being dead. But if this be true, it would be absurd to be eager for nothing but this all their lives, and then be troubled when that came for which they had all along been eagerly practicing."

- And St. Paul said, "We will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope."

So it is with a spirit of joy that I write of Peter as no longer suffering, no longer groaning within himself and saying with St. Paul, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

No, we are sure that he welcomed Sister Death with joy, and that underneath him he felt the Everlasting Arms.

Up in my room on the third floor, in our house on Mott Street, all the winter of 1947, that hard winter, he waited for the weather to clear so that he could go to the country. He had to lie in bed much of the time, and the plaster was all picked off the wall by the side of his bed. Marge and Joe Hughes, who lived next door, took care of his needs and the children ran in and out of his bedroom. He must have been very weary of lying in bed, he who had traveled north and south, east and west in this vast country. Everybody was always so reassuring, exclaiming how well he looked, how bright he was, but we who had known him these past seventeen years felt only the tragedy of the death in life he was living. Truly he practiced for death a very long time.

Peter was the poor man of his day. He was a St. Francis of modern times. He was used to poverty as a peasant is used to rough living, poor food, hard bed, or no bed at all, dirt, fatigue, and hard and unrespected work. He was a man with a mission, a vision, an apostolate, but he had put off from himself honors, prestige, recognition. He was truly humble of heart. Never a word of detraction passed his lips and as St. James said, the man who governs his tongue is a perfect man. He was impersonal in his love in that he loved all, saw all others around him as God saw them, saw Christ in them.

He never spoke idle words, though he was a great teacher who talked for hours on end, till late in the night and early morning. He roamed the streets and the countryside and talked to all who would listen. But when his great brain failed, he became silent. If he had been a babbler, he would have been a babbler to the end. But when he could no longer think, as he himself expressed it, he remained silent.

For the last five years of his life he was this way, suffering, silent, dragging himself around, watched by us all for fear he would get lost, as he did once for three days; he was shouted at loudly by visitors as though he were deaf, talked to with condescension as one talks to a child from whom language must be simplified even to the point of absurdity. That was one of the hardest things we had to bear, we who loved him and worked with him for so long—to see others treat him as though he were simple-minded.

The fact was he had been stripped of all. He had stripped himself throughout life; he had put off the old man in order to put on the new. He had done all that he could do to denude himself of the world, and I mean the world in the evil sense—that world we pledge ourselves to combat, with the flesh and the devil. There is another sense of the word—“God so loved the world,” and, “God looked at the world and found it was good”—and Peter was an apostle to this world. He loved people; he saw in

them what God meant them to be, as he saw the world as God meant it to be, and loved it.

He had stripped himself, but there remained work for God to do. We are to be pruned as the vine is pruned so that it can bear fruit, and this we cannot do ourselves. God did it for him. He took from him his mind, the one thing he had left, the one thing perhaps he took delight in. He could no longer think. He could no longer discuss with others, give others in a brilliant overflow of talk his keen analysis of what was going on in the world; he could no longer make what he called his synthesis of cult, culture and cultivation.

He was sick more than five years. It was as though he had had a stroke in his sleep. He dragged one leg after him, his face was slightly distorted, and he found it hard to speak. And he repeated, "I can no longer think." When he tried to, his face would have a strained, suffering expression. He had cardiac asthma, a hernia (as many hard workers have) and he was in pain when he coughed.

For the first couple of years of invalidism, he lived in Easton with us, and the last two at our retreat house at Newburgh, New York. The house was too cold for him in winter as we burned only wood in our furnace, so he lived in a rear house, a house of poured cement built originally as a chicken coop, which was divided into three rooms, one occupied by Father John Faley, our resident priest, another by Alan Bates, and the third shared by Peter with Hans Tunneson. I was thankful that Hans was with him to keep the room warm and clean, and to watch over him at night. Hans was a Norwegian seaman who has worked with us these past years. It was typical of Peter never to ask anything for himself, and, of course, not privacy, that greatest of all luxuries. He had never had a bed of his own, really, until it came to his last illness. He just took what was available in the house of hospitality.

He had always been a meager eater, getting along on

two meals a day, never eating between meals. He used to say when he was offered anything, "I don't need it." But toward the close of his life, he was inclined to stuff down his food hastily like a child, and he had to be cautioned to eat slowly. Perhaps this was a hangover from the hunger of a childhood in that large family where there was never too much to eat.

Other habits clung to him. When I'd go in to see if he were warm enough, I'd find him lying in bed with his pants folded neatly and under his head, and his coat wrapped around his feet, a habit I suppose he got from living in flophouses where clothes are often stolen. And once I found him sleeping in the dead of winter with only a spread over him, in a stony cold room. Someone had taken his blankets.

One thing we can be happy about too, and that is that he felt he had finished his work before his mind failed. He used to say, "I have written all I have to say; I have done all I can; let the younger men take over." So he suffered but not with the feeling that there was much still that he could do.

A few months before he died, we attempted to record Peter's voice on wire, and we had him read aloud all his essays on houses of hospitality. His voice strangely enough was louder and clearer as it came over the wire than it had been for a long time. We spent quite a few days over this, Dave Mason and I, because Peter tired easily. Then, after we had triumphantly made a fifteen-minute spool, someone else tried to work the machine and erased it all.

For two months I had been at the farm while Jane O'Donnell who was in charge of Maryfarm, our retreat center, was away at Grailville, and then while returning from the funeral of Larry Heaney, I received a telephone call telling me of Peter's death. Just before I had left, I had told him of Larry's sudden death, and he said yes, to my question as to whether he remembered Larry. He had loved him very much, had sent him his quotations listed as *cult*, *culture* and *cultivation* over the years, and

rejoiced in his total acceptance of his teaching. When I said to him, "Now you will have someone waiting for you in heaven," his face lit up in a radiant smile. He had not smiled for months; there had been only a look of endurance, even pain, on his face.

That was my good-by. Over the telephone in Avon, Ohio, at Our Lady of the Wayside Farm, I heard the news.

It was midnight and I had already fallen asleep. Bill and Dorothy Gauchet were not yet asleep. They had been saying the Rosary for Ruth Ann and Catherine Reser, they said, because Catherine had lost another baby a few months before, and Ruth Ann had lost her husband. When I hung up the receiver, Bill suggested we say Vespers of the Office of the Dead for Peter, so we knelt there in that farm living room and prayed those beautiful Psalms that are balm to the sore heart. No matter how much a death is expected, no matter how much you may regard it as a happy release, there is a gigantic sense of loss. With our love of life, we have not yet gotten to that point where we can say with the desert Father, St. Anthony, "The spaces of this life, set over against eternity, are brief and poor."

Peter had been sitting up for supper that Sunday night, and had been out in the sun all afternoon. There had been visitors from Friendship House, and on Saturday Lydwinne von Kersbergen from Grailville had been at the farm, and had told Peter with love and reverence, all he had meant to the lay apostolate throughout the world. It was like a benediction from Europe. She might indeed have been representing Europe at that moment in saying farewell to him. His writings have been published there; he had been recognized there as perhaps he never has in this, his own adopted country.

John Filliger had shaved him Saturday and Michael Kovalak had dressed and cared for him on Sunday, conducting him to the chapel for Mass that morning, taking him to and from his room to rest. He had looked in again at Peter at nine Sunday night and found him sleeping rather restlessly on his side instead of on his back as he

usually did. Eileen had given him, as she did every night, a glass of wine, and I suppose Hans made his usual facetious gesture with the water pitcher, asking her to fill it for him. "It makes me happy to think how everyone cared for him, everyone feeling honored to do so," Jane always said, when she spoke of Peter's needs. He was surrounded by loving care. Father Faley brought him communion the days he could not get up, and it was impressive, day after day at that sick bed, to hear those prayers, to witness that slow dying. A king, a pope, could have had no more devoted attention, than Father John Faley, who has been with us for a year, gave to Peter.

At eleven that night, Hans said, Peter began coughing, and it went on for some minutes. He then tried to rise, and fell over on his pillow, breathing heavily. Hans put on the light and called Father Faley and Jane. Michael, Eileen and others came too, and there were prayers for the dying about the bedside. He died immediately; there was no struggle, no pain.

He was laid out at Newburgh the first night, in the conference room where he had sat so often trying to understand the discussions and lectures. Flowers were all about him from shrubs in our garden and from our neighbors. He wore a suit which had been sent in for the poor. There was no rouge on his gray face, which looked like granite, strong, contemplative, set toward eternity. There was a Requiem Mass in our chapel sung by Michael and Alan and the rest.

The next morning he was brought to Mott Street and laid out at the end of the store we used as office. Tom Sullivan's desk was moved to make way for the coffin and all the tables taken down at which the paper is usually mailed out. The room had been scrubbed the night before by Rocky and Tony; since they had painted the rooms only a month before, everything was fresh. (Rocky was a seaman, somewhat of a wandering monk, who had been with the Trappists for a while; Anthony Aratari, a writer, painter and craftsman.)

All that day and night people came from the neighbor-

hood, from all over the city, from different parts of the country, and filled the little store and knelt before the coffin. Whenever we were sitting in the room, we saw them quietly, almost secretly, pressing their rosary beads to Peter's hands. Some bent down and kissed him. My daughter came from West Virginia. David, who had accompanied Peter on one of his last trips, stayed home with the children, since Tamar had known Peter the longest; since her sixth year, in fact.

The neighbors sent beautiful floral pieces made up of carnations and gardenias, and all around the coffin were branches of the flowering shrubs the group had sent down from Maryfarm. The sweet smells filled the room and it was hot and fresh outside. Priests came from different orders to lead in the Rosary. And all that night we sat with him.

The funeral was at nine o'clock next morning at the Salesian Transfiguration Church on Mott Street. Peter always loved the Salesians, and had always urged them to continue opening craft schools and agricultural schools throughout the country.

The pall bearers were John Filliger and Joe Hughes, both of whom had come to us during the seamen's strike in 1936, and had been with us ever since; Bob Ludlow, *The Catholic Worker's* chief editorial writer; David Mason, who brought out a book of Peter's writings; Arthur Sheehan, former editor of *The Catholic Worker*, and Hazen Ordway, both dear and devoted friends. Arthur had been one of the heads of the Boston group and St. Benedict's farm at Upton; Hazen had been librarian at the Marist Seminary in Washington, when he heard me speak of the work there in 1937 and left immediately to join us, associating himself with us ever since.

Father Francis Meenan, Holy Ghost Father from Norwalk, Connecticut, sang the Mass, with Father Divisio and Father Faley the deacons. They and a group of other priests, headed by Monsignor Nelson, who represented Cardinal Spellman, met the body at the door and ushered it into the church. Everyone sang the Requiem Mass to-

gether—the organist, the priests, the seminarians, the parishioners, all of our family from Mott Street and Mary-farm, Newburgh, Ade Bethune, Jane O'Donnell, Serena and Stanley Vishnewsky, and the group from Easton, Victor and Jon and Chris—you could almost hear their individual voices. It was a loud and triumphant singing, with a note of joy, because we were sure Peter heard us in heaven; we were sure that angels and saints joined in.

Peter was buried in St. John's Cemetery, Queens, in a grave given us by Father Pierre Conway, a Dominican.

Peter was another St. John, a voice crying in the wilderness, and a voice too, saying, "My little children, love one another." As the body was carried out of the church those great and triumphant words were sung—the *In Paradisum*.

"May the angels lead thee into paradise; may the martyrs receive thee at thy coming and lead thee into the holy city of Jerualem. May the choir of angels receive thee and mayest thou have eternal rest with Lazarus, who once was poor."

"We need to make the kind of society," Peter had said, "where it is easier for people to be good." And because his love of God made him love his neighbor, lay down his life indeed for his brother, he wanted to cry out against the evils of the day—the state, war, usury, the degradation of man, the lack of a philosophy of work. He sang the delights of poverty (he was not talking of destitution) as a means to making a step to the land, of getting back to the dear natural things of earth and sky, of home and children. He cried out against the machine because, as Pius XI had said, "Raw materials went into the factory and came out ennobled and man went in and came out degraded"; and because it deprived a man of what was as important as bread, his work, his work with his hands, his ability to use all of himself, which made him a whole man and a holy man.

Yes, he talked of these material things. He knew we needed a good social order where men could grow up to

their full stature and be men. And he also knew that it took men to make such a social order. He tried to form them, he tried to educate them, and God gave him poor, weak materials with which to work. He was as poor in the human material he had around him, as he was in material goods. We are the offscouring of all, as St. Paul said, and yet we know we have achieved great things in these brief years, and not ours is the glory. God has chosen the weak things to confound the strong, the fools of this earth to confound the wise.

Peter had been insulted and misunderstood in his life as well as loved. He had been taken for a plumber and left to sit in the basement when he had been invited for dinner. He had been thrown out of a Knights of Columbus meeting. One pastor who invited him to speak demanded the money back which he had sent Peter for carfare to his upstate parish, because, he said, we had sent him a Bowery bum, and not the speaker he expected. "This then is perfect joy," Peter could say, quoting the words of St. Francis to Friar Leo, when he was teaching him where perfect joy was to be found.

He was a man of sincerity and peace, and yet one letter came to us recently, accusing him of having a holier-than-thou attitude. Yes, Peter pointed out that it was a precept that we should love God with our whole heart and soul and mind and strength, and not just a counsel, and he taught us what it meant to be sons of God, and restored to us our sense of responsibility in a chaotic world. Yes, he was "holier than thou," holier than anyone we ever knew.

"Do not forget," Mary Frecon, head of our Harrisburg house, said before she left, "do not forget to tell of the roots of the little tree that they cut through in digging his grave. I kept looking at those roots and thinking how wonderful it is that Peter is going to nourish that tree—that thing of beauty." The undertaker had tried to sell us artificial grass to cover up the soil, "the unsightly grave," as he called it, but we loved the sight of that earth that

was to cover Peter. He had come from the earth, as we all had, and to the earth he was returning.

Around the grave we all said the Rosary and after the Benedictus we left.

POSTSCRIPT

□ We were just sitting there talking when Peter Maurin came in.

We were just sitting there talking when lines of people began to form, saying, "We need bread." We could not say, "Go, be thou filled." If there were six small loaves and a few fishes, we had to divide them. There was always bread.

We were just sitting there talking and people moved in on us. Let those who can take it, take it. Some moved out and that made room for more. And somehow the walls expanded.

We were just sitting there talking and someone said, "Let's all go live on a farm."

It was as casual as all that, I often think. It just came about. It just happened.

I found myself, a barren woman, the joyful mother of children. It is not easy always to be joyful, to keep in mind the duty of delight.

The most significant thing about *The Catholic Worker* is poverty, some say.

The most significant thing is community, others say. We are not alone any more.

But the final word is love. At times it has been, in the words of Father Zossima, a harsh and dreadful thing, and our very faith in love has been tried through fire.

We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know Him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone any more. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship.

We have all known the long loneliness and we have

learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community.

It all happened while we sat there talking, and it is still going on.

INDEX

- Adam, Karl, 177
Augustine, St., 9, 40, 163, 206,
286, 300
- Bakunin, Michael, 170
Belloc, Hilaire, 62, 299
Berkman, Alexander, 63, 296
Bethune, Ade, 216-18, 229, 262,
269, 313
Bishop, Claire Huchet, 252
Buber, Martin, 252
- Cardijn, Canon J., 181
Chesterton, G. K., 15, 62, 299
Cort, John, 223, 228, 236, 248
- de Bethune, A. *See* Bethune,
Ade
- de Lubac, Fr. Henri, S.J., 62,
289
- Debs, Eugene, 41, 51, 70, 117
Dostoevski, Fyodor, 38, 47, 124,
131, 163
- Ettor, Joe, 60, 72, 75
- Ferrer, Francisco, 61, 71
Figner, Vera, 42
Flynn, Elizabeth Gurley, 60, 75
Francis de Sales, St., 10, 197
- Gill, Eric, 62, 217, 218, 274, 299
Giovannitti, Arturo, 60, 72, 75,
78
- Godwin, William, 62
Goldman, Emma, 63, 68
Gorki, Maxim, 47
- Guardini, Romano, 98, 171, 246
- Haymarket martyrs, 42, 51
Haywood, Bill, 60, 75
Hennacy, Ammon, 296-98
Hergenhan, Steve, 218-27, 251
Hill, Joe, 60
Hugo, Fr. John J., 284, 286-87,
• 289, 291, 296
Huysmans, Joris Karl, 124, 163
- Imitation of Christ*, The, 131,
155, 163
- James, William, 135, 161
John, St., 72, 314
John of the Cross, St., 163, 275
Joyce, James, 124, 163
- Keller, James, 245
Koestler, Arthur, 85
Kropotkin, Prince Peter, 42, 61-
62, 71, 172, 202, 218
- Lenin, V. I., 75, 97-98, 113, 116,
194-95, 251-52
- Leo XIII, Pope, 71
Levi, Carlo, 109
Ligutti, Msgr. Luigi, 253, 268
London, Jack, 41, 46, 47
Ludlow, Robert, 298-302, 313
- McGoey, Fr. John, 253
McNabb, Fr. Vincent, O.P., 62,
208, 299
- McNicholas, Archbishop John
T., 245-46

- Maritain, Jacques, 211
 Marx, Karl, 62, 70, 96, 274
 Mauriac, François, 68, 81
 Maurin, Peter, 9, 189, 193–206,
 208–10, 216, 217, 219–20, 223,
 224, 225, 226, 227, 243, 248,
 250, 252–59, 265, 266, 270–71,
 274–75, 299, 307–18
 Mooney, Tom, 72, 257
 Mundelein, George Cardinal,
 170
 Pascal, Blaise, 124, 159
 Paul, St., 225, 284, 293, 307
 Pegler, Westbrook, 68
 Peguy, Charles, 194
 Pius XI, Pope, 181, 314
 Pius XII, Pope, 249, 299
 Prohme, Rayna, 52–55, 79
 Proudhon, Pierre Joseph, 62,
 274, 289
 Roosevelt, Eleanor, 240
 Roy, Fr. Pacifique, S.S.J., 276–
 84
 Sacco, Nicola, 61, 77, 166–68,
 172
 Sandburg, Carl, 41
 Schrembs, Archbishop Joseph,
 247
 Silone, Ignazio, 110
 Sinclair, Upton, 41, 46, 47
 Sorokin, Pitirim A., 242
 Stratman, Fr. Franziskus, O.P.,
 296
 Sugrue, Thomas, 252
 Teresa of Avila, St., 163, 184,
 275
 Thomas Aquinas, St., 194, 300,
 305
 Tolstoi, Leo, 47, 62, 71, 81, 97,
 131, 141, 147, 297
 Tomkins, Fr. James, 252–53
 Tresca, Carlo, 60, 75
 Trotsky, Leon, 74, 75, 230
 Ude, Fr. John, 296
 Vanzetti, Bartolomeo, 61, 77,
 166–68, 172
 Vorse, Mary Heaton, 185–87,
 237–38
 Wersing, Martin, 248
 Wesley, John, 32