



Reflections during Advent: Dorothy Day on Prayer, Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience

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In his September 2015 speech to the United States Congress, Pope Francis credited American journalist Dorothy Day (1897-1980), cofounder of the Catholic Worker movement, for her deep faith and social activism. Day's devotion to her Catholic faith and its traditions reverberated through a series of four reflections published during Advent 1966 in *The Ave Maria* magazine, a Catholic weekly founded in 1865 by Rev. Edward F. Sorin, C.S.C. These reflections, available for the first time as an eBook collection with a new reader's guide and an excerpt from "On Pilgrimage," are as important today as they were fifty years ago.

Written a year after the close of the Second Vatican Council, Dorothy Day's Reflections during Advent address a Catholic Church in a time of tremendous upheaval. Catholic devotions fell out of practice. People sought God separate from Church life. Seminarians, novices, and vowed religious were turning away from religious life. American affluence and materialism seemed to know no bounds. It was a time in the Church not unlike the world today.

"One of the most intriguing things about Dorothy Day was how she managed to harmonize a radical social vision with the most orthodox and traditional kind of Catholic piety," writes Lawrence S. Cunningham, the John A. O'Brien professor of theology (emeritus) at the University of Notre Dame, in his introduction to the collection. "Her views on society would cause the most 'progressive' Democratic voter to pause, but her spiritual life was fueled by her fidelity as a Benedictine oblate to the Liturgy of the Hours, her meditations on sacred scripture, her love of the lives of the saints, and her assiduous participation in the Eucharistic liturgy."

Day begins her series of four reflections with a powerful witness to prayer, the Rosary, the Angelus, and her devotion to the Blessed Mother. Then she turns her attention to the three evangelical counsels of the Catholic Church—vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—providing insights into a Catholic way of life that benefits all, whether lay person or religious.

The reflections exhibit Day's personal and rousing writing style with stories that fans of her 1955 landmark autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, will welcome as captivating insights into the continuation of her life story. The reflections are told in her unique voice and filled with stories about Day's childhood, conversion to Catholicism, devotional life, Catholic Worker communities, work with Peter Maurin, and much more. With each word, you will feel her dedication to the compassionate defense of the dignity of every human person, especially the poor and outcast of society.

This work is a must-read for every Advent season, a timeless reminder of Day's witness to faith that echoes Pope Francis's words in his historic address to Congress: "Her social activism, her passion for justice and for the cause of the oppressed, were inspired by the Gospel, her faith, and the example of the saints."

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