

Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in Tandem: The Moral Leader of a Moral Leader

Dorothy Day, one of the cofounders of the Catholic Worker Movement, was a moral leader whose leadership was based on prayer and faith leading to action—and on a felt reliance upon the leadership given to her by her colleague Peter Maurin. She spent time working with and on behalf of the poor, and she and Peter Maurin initiated a newspaper, *The Catholic Worker*, still very much with us, still selling, as the slogan goes, at “a penny a copy”; and they inspired others to start “hospitality houses”—soup kitchens—across the nation, and in foreign countries; a Catholicism of concern for the vulnerable and needy.

Miss Day was also a writer of conscience who knew how to take care of herself in the inevitable polemics that were sparked by her social and religious efforts. Early in her career, she had been an independent-minded, scrappy journalist, no stranger to radical politics and its consequences (she was jailed, for instance, as a picketing suffragette). She had also written fiction. Indeed, to mention the moral leadership of a woman who is now being considered by many within and outside the Catholic Church as a desirable candidate for sainthood is to risk the tautological.

Like Robert Kennedy, she understood the necessity of learning how to get along and work with people to achieve visionary goals—the combining of moral ideals and effective action into leadership.

Day was a vigorous social activist who wanted to be of help to the poor and hungry in an America that was very much unresponsive to such people. She started soup kitchens in the 1920s and 1930s, when they were often unknown, and she took her followers into new worlds of human need, desperation, and injury. The hospitality houses she established with Peter Maurin, a fellow leader of what became a social movement, were portents of what we now call centers of community service or welfare assistance: places where jobless men and women, ill and hungry, were fed, clothed, and steered toward whatever housing and work was available. No wonder she was praised by one pope after another as a spiritual and social leader, a writer and reformer and thinker worthy of admiration and veneration. Yet she herself saw her inspiration as coming from Maurin, a moral “needler”—the leader of someone others saw as the moral leader—and from God through the “notions” she received during prayer.

The Usefulness of a “Needler”: A Leader by Proxy

In the 1970s, I interviewed Day with my tape recorder nearby. I wanted to talk about her, the ideas and values she espoused, her achievements, the lessons she had offered all who read her words or knew of her political and charitable deeds. To be sure, anyone who had worked in one of Day’s soup kitchens and read her newspaper or her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, knew of Peter Maurin, his spiritual engagement with her: she was a young, cosmopolitan woman, well-read and a friend of writers and artists and intellectuals; he was of French peasant background, considerably her elder, a working man and a wanderer who talked of Christ’s life and teachings. But many of us who regarded ourselves as savvy about her political as well as spiritual and social movement knew to pay mere lip service to Day’s constant mentions of

Maurin. She was the leader, the bright, articulate, insistent, tireless person whose moral voice and vision had stirred thousands across the world—through the printed word, and through those soup kitchens.

She was aware of that distinction made over the years, between her highly visible leadership and the “legend” (some call it) of Peter Maurin’s companion role in getting *The Catholic Worker* going, shaping its mix of spiritual advocacy and concrete connection to human vulnerability. But Maurin was no legend for her; he was the one responsible for all this.

In fact, she was trying to tell me about moral leadership, her leadership as someone else elicited it, drew it out of her, and she would have no part of my indifference to Maurin; she relentlessly put the kibosh on every effort I made to return us to her important ideas, for which (through an indirect egoism) I was waiting. Eventually, she had a long say on the “needler”—on how a person can be a leader by proxy: “The world notices some people, and it doesn’t know much about others. I’ve had writers come talk with me—they want to know how I did this, and when I did that, what I think about one or another subject, and I tell them we’ve got to settle this business of pronouns before we go any further. I tell them about Peter, and what he did for us—to us. I tell them that they should stop all the time putting me first, forgetting Peter. He was the one who got us all going, kept us all going here, when we started as a community—he was very much a leader, you know. But I’m not being heard—so I try to get us into the details: that’s where the truth lies, every novelist knows!”

“I’ll volunteer this: if Peter hadn’t driven ‘us all [to get on with things] you’d not be sitting there, worrying over that machine—whether it works or not. He had a sharp eye for what needed to be done, and he figured out, all the time, who would be the right person to do this, and who would do *that* the best. He knew his own limits, so he bore down on others. It took me a long while to realize that he knew exactly what he was doing when he wouldn’t stay out of your hair, when he wouldn’t drop the subject, until finally, to get him off my back more than anything else, I went along and did whatever it was that he’d say ‘wanted doing.’”

Now, as I read those words, I think of mothers, fathers, teachers, older brothers—moral needlers of others, we can all be.

What “Wanted Doing”

“How I remember those two words!” Day said. “‘Wanted doing.’ There’s more to them (I began to realize only years after Peter died) than any of us ever realized as we heard the expression used over and over. Now I can be the literary critic; I can examine his language, the way he chose to put things. I can observe the ‘passive voice.’ I can realize that he was, in two words, making a huge statement to us about what we believed, and also it was a way of getting around us. I mean: he was telling us that we are about something larger than ourselves, that there were things that ‘wanted doing’—that God wanted them done, or if you weren’t a believer (many who have worked with us have not been Catholics, have called themselves agnostics) then they needed to be done on the face of it. But don’t forget this was a leader at work; he knew in his bones how to get done what ‘wanted doing!’”

In a sense, she was letting me know she had learned a lesson about leadership from someone who in two words could sometimes move mountains of pride, of self-absorption, or maybe of divergent interests that took various individuals away from the “doing” that he and they could agree was “wanted.” Whatever the reasons that *had* kept those tasks or obligations undone, Maurin developed a way of alerting others to a need, and then “needling” people with respect to that need. The refrain was constant, but Peter had various ways of insuring that the doing would, in fact, get done. Again and again I’d hear about those ways, even as I couldn’t help but note Day’s own success as a student of his—as herself a needler, because she was no stranger to the moral gestures and psychological approaches she described so devotedly as being in her friend and colleague.

“Peter was always telling me he learned one thing from so-and-so, and something else from someone else,” she once let me know—about a half an hour after she told me how lucky she was that she stumbled

into Peter, who taught her so very much; and then she mentioned others who had been "strong" when she was "weak," or who had supplied her with a necessary long-range perspective when she had been in grave danger of being shortsighted. She was sincerely grateful to Peter, who was, she insisted, the one who got so much going in her head, in her soul. Indeed, once she went so far as to say that if I really wanted to know about the Catholic Worker Movement, I'd "need to understand what Peter brought to it." I tried hard to get beyond such self-effacement, to learn about her accomplishments. I first met Day in the 1950s, while I was going to medical school and did volunteer work in one of the Catholic Worker hospitality houses. She could be aloof, moody, and intimidating. In the 1970s I talked with her in order to write a history of the newspaper *The Catholic Worker*.

She had memories of her early years as the coeditor of that newspaper, as one of its major contributors, and, of course, as the energetic organizer of a soup kitchen, a place where some homeless people could have a temporary stay. She, too, had memories of herself: "I never planned it this way—that I'd be called the leader of anything. There was a long time when I had trouble leading my own life, never mind having a thought or two about how others should lead theirs! I get letters, still, from people who say all these wonderful compliments—that they're 'inspired'; and I have to smile to myself, because for me the book [*The Long Loneliness*] is a confessional, much of it. I know how distant I could be—off in my own world! I learned how to 'make confession' when I became a Catholic. Many of my friends back then, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, were 'confessing' to psychoanalysts; I was going to priests! They'd tell me that they didn't see their analysts, they sat behind the couch; and I'd say, the same with us at the church—the priests are also out of sight when you go to tell them what you've been doing, and ask for forgiveness. Of course, they'd tell me I should forget the forgiveness stuff: I needed to go see a psychoanalyst to *understand* myself—that was 'the bottom line.' I wasn't against understanding. Who would be? But I'd try to help them understand what the Church had come to mean to me. I'd say that understanding is a step toward forgiveness, that if we can find reasons to forgive ourselves,

then we can be in better shape to take on the world—but I'm afraid their assumptions and mine had become quite different. To tell you the truth, I think these days [the 1970s], it's changed: priests are more interested in psychology, and psychoanalysts 'understand' the limits of pure understanding that isn't accompanied by some human gesture. But I've gotten us off the subject here."

In a way she had, though I was impressed by what she had said, and that phrase, "human gesture," has echoed in my mind over the years as I have listened to some of my colleagues and myself: the temptation to try to be cleverly abstract, to put one's confidence in the cognitive side of mental life—those clarifications and interpretations of emotionality that we offer our patients in the name of psychiatric and psychoanalytic healing.

Dorothy Day brought us back to a discussion of the vicissitudes she experienced as a leader of a social, political, and religious movement—she did so by addressing an interesting aspect of medical as well as psychiatric practice, and indeed, of social science as it aspires toward the "objectivity" of the natural sciences: "I used to listen to my friends talk of their experiences in analysis—that was the phrase they started using, 'in analysis.' They learned X 'in analysis,' and they learned Y, and then, I'd notice, it would be 'my analyst says'—about everything: it was as if they'd surrendered themselves to someone else, and they had to keep telling the world what that someone else thought about everything. I know, I've read about 'transference,' about ways patients react to their doctors, turn them into parents, gods! I once said to one of my old friends: you've turned yourself over, lock, stock, and barrel to this other person and you don't even know who he is, *really*—what he believes in and how *he* behaves. He's busy 'working things out' with you, but who is he, and since everything is so 'subtle,' you keep on saying, what kind of subtle messages are you learning from him?

"I was worrying about the erosion of her values and principles. She'd been a fighter, a labor organizer; and now she was spending her time in libraries studying sociology and psychology, and she was telling everyone that the best thing we can do is figure out things, figure out how the mind works and how our society functions. I thought to my-

self, yes, no one can argue with that, really, but she doesn't see what's happening to her: there's a big shift taking place in her moral life—she's absorbing the beliefs of her doctor, and putting aside her own, past beliefs, and her actions, and she's *unconscious* of that (God forbid!), and maybe her doctor is, too! He's giving her more *direction* than either of them fully realizes, that was my thought. But I'll tell you, the Church helped me there—I'd learned by then to be on guard against the sin of pride: I could feel the smugness in my heart, and to be honest, I think it showed in my eyes, and maybe a thin smile that would come over my face! I remember catching myself. I talked to myself: 'Dorothy, if she's being "taken in" by someone unwittingly, then how about you and the people who work with you?' Peter Maurin had always warned me that if you're going to teach people, you'd better be clear about what you want to come of it, because a teacher is a leader, and if a teacher doesn't know that, there's trouble to pay!"

She had gotten at the whole matter of a "value-free" psychoanalysis, proclaimed for so long as both desirable and possible (as in Heinz Hartmann's *Psychoanalysis and Moral Values*). But she had also managed to bring up the subject of moral leadership as it takes place not in politics or religion or in our educational institutions but in our clinical offices, where doctors see patients for "troubles" and end up becoming more than healers, or maybe, healers in the larger sense, that is, guides who prompt, persuade, suggest, direct, even inspire.

Similarly with her and her work: we were, after all, discussing her experience as a leader, her realization that the major issue for her was no longer what words to put on paper (though she would always be a writer) but what words to say to others around her, and to what purpose, and with what effect. Nor were words all that mattered, as she gradually discovered—again, with the help of her cofounder: "Sometimes I'd try hard to get it right, what I'd tell the people in the office [of *The Catholic Worker*], or on the soup line, but it wouldn't work, what I'd said. Peter would remind me later that it's not only what you say, but *how you say it*. You know, that's pure common sense; it's 'folk wisdom'—and yet how many of us really remember that!

"That's why I keep mentioning Peter—he taught me a lot about how

to get along with others. I got so tired of being told that I was the one who got the newspaper going and I was the one who turned our idea of feeding the hungry into a reality. I keep telling people that it was Peter who got this going in me and in others—but then I'll be told that he 'energized' me, and that's that! He was a leader, a moral leader, looking for some people who would link arms with him. Notice I didn't say he was a leader looking for followers! I've read many accounts of our struggles here [at St. Joseph's House] and in other places [hospitality houses], and Lord, so often the visitors mean well; they want to write favorable stories, but they miss something. They're always trying to figure out who's the head, who started this, or they've decided before they come here that they know the answers already, and all they need to do is fill in a few blanks by asking me some questions. When I try to steer them away from me, when I talk about Peter, and what he meant to us, or when I try to get them to interview others, they're made uncomfortable, or they get impatient. (I'm an old journalist and I know all the signs!)

"I wrote a note to myself once, after a long interview with a reporter; I said when people come here and ask questions, I think they usually reveal more about themselves—their view of this world—than they end up learning about us, because I notice that when I tell them what I regard to be God's truth about our life at the *Worker*, they right away want to understand it through their values rather than learn about ours. That's why I'm always being asked about my 'leadership role,' and my 'reason for deciding to start the Catholic Worker Movement.' I'll try to be polite, and I'll try not to be angry and dismissive. But it can be very frustrating and hard—for them as well as me.

"Once, a while back, I totally lost control! I became mischievous. I teased the man. He asked me the usual questions (what, why, how); and he wanted to know my 'style as a leader,' how I 'work with others.' I told him I'd never thought about it; I told him we never really thought too far in the future—we weren't planners. We just went with our hearts and we prayed and prayed for direction from God and His son. I could see the disbelief all over his face. The idea of prayer as a means of making decisions—he must have thought that we're naïve, or

foolish and superstitious, or maybe that we had our clever strategies and schemes, even though we were pretending that we were throwing ourselves at the mercy of Jesus! Yes, that's what I told him, that we were throwing ourselves at the Lord's mercy, and his face radiated mistrust and suspicion! So I tried to be nicer—to help him. I became very serious—I'd *been* serious but I really *looked* serious now. I told him about Peter Maurin, who he was. I told him how he spoke, and how he could waken up your spiritual side. I told him about that phrase 'wanted doing'—I thought it would help him write his story: it's a way of understanding how we think and talk, and he said he wanted to get to 'fundamentals.'

"You know, that was the hardest, rather than the easiest [for the reporter]. I suddenly realized that he thought I was being a tease! He thought I was pretending to be a dreamy, mystical person who didn't know what she was doing, really, but who had stumbled into something (by chance, maybe)—when all the while I knew exactly what I was trying to do. I didn't know what to say beyond what I'd said already. I kept repeating that I was trying my best to live the way Jesus told us we should try to live, and I was failing sometimes, but my 'goal' (he kept using that word: what are your goals?) was to keep trying, the best I could.

"We'd reached an impasse. He was getting fidgety, crossing and uncrossing his legs, and looking at his list of questions over and over. He told me once more that he was sent there to do a piece on me—how I functioned as a 'convert,' a woman, doing what I was doing. What's my style as a leader? That was his big question. His editor had asked that, and he was trying to get the answer—and I wasn't giving him much to go on! I told him, finally, that the problem was this: leadership isn't only something in you, in a person—your personality; leadership depends on where you are as much as who you are, and it depends on the company you're keeping. That's why I was trying to get him to spend more time with our folks here, including our guests (the needy people being served lunch, for example) instead of asking me all these personal questions about my 'motives' and my 'authority,' and my 'style of

management.' Every time he did that I came back at him with a plea that he realize how much of our actions depend on the people we're here to learn from: we take our cues from them. But he'd have no part of that—and I don't mean to be sly or smug when I say that. The truth is, he reminded me of myself—and not just me as I was when I was a young reporter, but me as I was when I was talking with him, and as I'll always be! I guess that I was *also* someone a bit different then, when I was talking with him, because of what had happened to me [her conversion], and where I was living [in a tenement building at the edge of New York City's Bowery], and because of all that, I had a different idea of what that word 'leadership' means than he did, or his editor—or I myself, my old self that's still a part of me!"

For me, at the time, to hear such remarks was to step in the shoes of that reporter. I conjured him up in my mind, his appearance, the frustrated look on his face as he conversed with her, because, like him, I had trouble accepting Dorothy Day's version of her leadership. She struck me as having a strong personality—self-possessed, even her quiet spells a force to be reckoned with; and, not least, politically shrewd. Indeed, I'd heard her talk of her complex relationships with various church officials who worried that her outspokenly radical social vision (and her unqualified pacifism) would be interpreted by many as explicitly sanctioned by the Church. I'd also heard her discuss national politics—this was no naïf! She could read between the lines of *The New York Times*, and garner from a perusal of various stories "all the news" that *wasn't* "fit to print." She could even make penetratingly astute comments about various politicians—of a kind they themselves, out of their daily experiences, knew to make. Indeed, at such seemingly offhand moments I felt I was in the presence of one of those politicians: a person who was thoroughly in touch with realpolitik, who had in her mind a Rolodex of sorts whose phone numbers would put her in touch with, well, power. She knew influential writers and academics, and she knew who they knew. She knew, finally, the importance of a printed story, be it in a newspaper or a magazine. She had, after all, herself been a longtime reporter, and she had worked hard, in her secular

activist years, to change laws, to provoke authority in order to shift the nature of its asserted domain.

In other conversations with her I'd heard that side of her asserted without embarrassment or shame—in fact, I had the impression that for her a lack of political savvy in a reformer or activist had to be regarded as not only a pragmatic flaw but a moral failure. Once she'd even, by not so subtle implication, spelled out that line of reasoning: "If you're going to try and change things, you'd better have your wits about you. One thing you can be sure of—those who are your opponents know exactly what's at stake. If you don't know that—if you assume their innocence or naïveté and (I hate to say it) their good intentions, then what you don't know will be your undoing, and you can take down others with you, so you're carrying a lot of responsibility on your shoulders."

What I remember most about those words was their resemblance to remarks made by Robert Kennedy as he tried to tell us doctors about the tough reality of politics. I also remember a visual moment: her blue eyes, directed right at mine, a slight glint to them. Though the words make her sound more than slightly canny, she looked to me like a tough old fighter who had waged many a struggle, known not a few prison stays, had long ago found out what makes for success, what increases the odds of failure, when it comes to taking on "principalities and powers," a phrase she naturally knew well, and was not rarely inclined to use.

How, then, to reconcile this secular, shrewd mind, this forceful presence, with her avowals of virtual ingenueness, inexperience, and innocence? She was a perplexed, newly converted Catholic young mother, husbandless and vulnerable and unsure of herself, who unaccountably became the lucky spiritual confidante of a man, Maurin, whom so many others regarded as a well-intentioned wanderer, far from adept at dealing with either people or the requirements of daily living, but whom she honored as the one who envisioned the need for a particular social and intellectual movement within the Catholic Church, and more than anyone else, herself included, helped turn such a dream into an effective organizational reality.

A Loner Learning to Lead—To Get Along with People

She knew what was her own downside—the melancholy that could work its way into her thoughts and her way of getting along with others. Moreover, she had always been an introspective loner, for all her ability to be appealing, lively in company—and that side of herself, she knew, imperiled her involvement in the community of Catholic Worker Movement people who lived and labored together.

When I asked her to describe Peter Maurin to me, it was as if she was addressing that aspect of herself by indirection. She emphasized his unassailable hopefulness, which she attributed to a kind of faith that was not hers to take for granted. She spoke of his selflessness, his eagerness to reach and teach others. I had my (psychoanalytic) doubts about anyone's selflessness, and she made clear she understood what I suppose could be called, ironically, the narcissism of selflessness, the way one can attract attention to oneself, gain satisfaction for oneself, through an insistent, apparently sacrificial interest in others.

She even went further, addressing what might be called the psychology of sainthood, and called Maurin "saintly": she told me that such people are "extravagant" in their generosity—a reckless unambitiousness, of sorts, I thought she was implying, though she was unwilling to put the matter quite that way. I tried to amplify, spoke of the "enterprise," the "push," that even a saint would possess. "I think some of our saints have thrown caution to the winds," she replied, and gave this as their reason: "They are called by God to behave as they do, and the rest of us can't figure out His reasons, or theirs."

Protecting Against the Darker Sides of Altruism

Maurin was her spiritual leader, so she firmly believed. Finally, I began to realize the nature of his role in her life as a moral leader: he lacked some of the qualities or traits that in herself she least liked. No matter

what others had every right and reason to think of her, she herself had quite another sense of what she had done! She had an eye, that is, for the darker side of her altruism.

Some of that candid self-criticism had been publicly acknowledged in her autobiography. I heard even more expansive references to her bouts of "arrogance," her moments of disregard for the worries or apprehensions of others. At the time I thought such self-confrontations excessive, themselves an aspect of her pride; though, Lord knows, an expressed repentance as a defensive maneuver against moments of self-importance or self-absorption has to be compared to other more familiar aspects of what George Eliot called our "unreflecting egoism," a phrase used in *Middlemarch*, which Day had read and read—a smugness and a self-satisfaction, for example, that all too often go unchecked in the secular world. She was quite clear, actually, about what life had been like for her before the confessional booth became a much-sought place of a self-examination: "I'm afraid many of us who were fighting the good fight on behalf of social justice had no sense of humor about ourselves, no ear for our own self-righteousness. We could be scolds! Pity anyone who didn't share our tastes or values! I remember with great pain what we thought of others, said of them—those not belonging to 'us.'"

She extolled confession as a saving necessity for herself—and then she was remembering Peter Maurin this way: "He had less vanity than anyone I ever met! Yes, we all do have vanity, I know. But he was too scattered and helter-skelter in his ways to be vain. Vanity requires a concentration of effort—a commitment to something that makes you pleased but tempts you to go too far, to become all too pleased! Peter would be here and there, he'd be all over the place; it was as if he was an errand boy for the Lord, and not himself, someone trying to fulfill his own agenda! I once heard someone say about Peter, 'He's not really of this world, but he's not otherworldly, either, and so he sure gets a lot going without being in the way.'"

She was getting us close to the heart of the matter: a certain kind of moral leadership of a moral agent for her—Peter's psychological qualities enabled him to become a much-needed lay-confessor or spiritual

guide, but also a person who enabled Day's idealism to be implemented in daily life through her various involvements with others. Without him, she was convinced, the Catholic Worker Movement would not have been realized. "I've always been a private person, and yet here I am, living in a community—no great privacy here! From the very start I had all these ideas, but I didn't know how to put them into action. I knew how to picket or protest, or write articles; but I didn't know how to take personal and daily responsibility for what I'd done on the streets or written—I mean, live it all out. I always wanted my own place; I wanted to be alone at times—even when I was in love with someone! A place where I could go and read and write, stare out of the window, look at a tree, the squirrels running all over it, look at birds perched or playing, flying—that was my idea of happiness. True, there are other kinds of happiness—but I guess what I'm trying to say is that I'm not a 'social animal,' and yet I've ended up living closely with others, and if I became a 'leader' (as so many people call me)—then it's been a strange psychological evolution!

"That's where Peter is the key; he was the one who turned my head around! I'd be out there hawking our paper, or protesting something, and then I'd want to go off and be by myself, or be with Tamar [her daughter] and no one else—but there Peter would be, reminding me of what had to be done, giving me his pep talks. I'd be grouchy, and he'd be mentioning those Bible stories and telling me, 'Dorothy, this is our big chance, right now—here!' No wonder I quote Catherine of Siena at the start of *The Long Loneliness* [All the way to heaven is heaven']. I can hear Peter saying to me that there is *here* and there is *heaven*, and our job is to bring the two as close together as possible.

"Now, you know, I could come up with that idea—borrow it from Catherine, and put it into the vernacular of this time and place; but to go further and make those words actually mean something *real* (to live out what I'd written or spoken)—that was 'something else again,' as our young people put it.

"There's where Peter turned me around: he taught me how to get on with people—not at a cocktail party, I knew how to do that, and not at a rally or a conference. I was an old veteran, but in my life. We started

with a soup kitchen, and in no time we had a community of us, living together. It wasn't 'us' versus 'them,' a few with 'ideas' and 'ideals' and the hungry poor 'we' worked to feed; it was a mix of people—some who had no place to stay, and 'us,' who were searching, you could say, for our place to stay!

"Can you imagine how difficult that transition was for me—and for my daughter? There were times when I wanted to flee for my life: I'm not just using an expression—I wanted out! I'd be rude or irritable or short-tempered. I'd go to my room and look at myself in the mirror and see a phony, or someone in deep trouble: I'd be saying one thing but doing another—I'd be nowhere near living up to what I told others I believed! Thank the Lord for being there to hear me, and thank the Lord for Peter, because he was there, too—he'd reassure me, or he'd tell me that we had no time to worry about our mistakes, or try to second-guess ourselves, because there was *this* to do, and *that*. He'd say things I just couldn't get out of my mind—that we were living for Jesus, so we can't be bothered by ourselves. He meant by that the petty worries we all have: I didn't say the right thing, or I made a big mistake when I did X or Y or Z! 'Dorothy,' he'd whisper, 'let's try to forget ourselves and help others do likewise.'

"Easier said than done! But it wasn't long before his words were in my head—in a big way! I'd quote him, of course. But more important, I'd think of what I'd learned from him while I was talking with our people [her coworkers], or with our guests [who came to be fed], or with my old friends. They [the people she'd known in her 'secular days', as she called them] thought that I was 'different' because I was a 'convert'—I was 'spouting church talk.' I'd be told. But the truth is I was learning how to be polite with people and considerate of them, and firm sometimes when firmness was needed, but firm in a way that didn't result in hurt feelings. I was learning to be an administrator—not an opinionated writer or journalist or party-goer! They thought I'd become 'prayerful,' but I think 'polite' was more like it: I was praying, all right—for the patience and tact to be able to be one of the people in charge. I hated to be called a founder of our paper, or the leader of our 'movement' (I didn't like that word 'movement' one bit). But I was the

someone who had to make decisions; people did come to me, looking for direction, and it was Peter who made me aware of the fact that I had to be aware of what a leader is, who a leader is, what kind of person you become when you're being held up by people, and they're looking to you for 'nods and nays,' Peter would put it."

She had much more to say about her increasingly astute ability to work reasonably well in an "organization." She remembered, actually, when she was first told about her "organizational role," her "leadership style"—by a Catholic sociology graduate student, who immediately incurred her wrath, until she realized how accurately he had taken the measure of things. She did indeed know how to smile on some occasions, appear worried on others. She knew how to ask others to do one task or another in a quiet, unassuming way, sometimes with an apology for doing so. She knew how to call "time out"—to suggest the need for collective prayers. She knew how to be self-effacing—when, in truth, she was very much trying to get her point across. I'd see that happen—she would speak softly, to the point that she was almost mumbling; and as a consequence, the one(s) addressed would draw nearer, pay more attention to what she was saying. She sometimes prefaced her suggestions or requests with impersonal phrases that clearly were the progeny, as it were, of Maurin's legendary "wanted doing." For example, she'd say "I'm told that" something "requires action," or "It's been said that we ought to think about how [or when] we get to" do a particular job.

When I asked her about those "passive-voice constructions" she looked at me as if I "wanted" some praying for—I'd used a pretentious way of talking that was, maybe, too clever by half. Yet I thought I saw a look of self-recognition in her eyes, and she did give it right back to me, so to speak, with this terse reminder of where I was: "Here we're trying to be the Lord's servants—He uses us all the time; that's our faith." God the leader, the hidden one who is also the source of energy and inspiration for her and those with whom she worked! God the active voice, and us trying hard (hope against hope) to be instruments of His, *that kind of* "passivity"! I have no doubt of the utter sincerity that informed her stated conviction. But I also observed firsthand the way

such an article of faith freed her to be a vigorously active person; and as I heard her talk and talk of the past, I eventually realized that she had, indeed, learned how to be a convincing moral leader with the help of someone with whom she worked in tandem, and whom she regarded as a master teacher—or rather, an emissary of *the* master of all of us.

A Moral Routine

Time after time during our conversations, she wanted to give Peter Maurin credit for helping her understand what it means to be in charge—what it requires and what it costs. “Peter kept reminding me that even in the voluntary action undertaken by a group of people, some look up to others, and if you try to ignore that—well, it’s foolish. ‘Better tell yourself, every once in a while, where you’re going, Dorothy,’ he’d say, and at first I didn’t pay much attention. He was emphasizing that I needed to look at what I was doing through the eyes of others—think of their lives while I was thinking of my plans, projects, programs, proposals! You can overdo that, and get nowhere: lots of times you have to plow on, and hope and pray others will join you; but every so often you ought to call a halt to yourself and ask yourself the big questions, and Peter made sure I did that.”

Obviously, I wanted to know how her friend did so—how this somewhat disorganized, passionate man who had wandered the world as a laborer and itinerant preacher of Christ’s message had managed to whip her into meditative shape, to get her to pay close heed to the longer haul while she was so fully involved in “a moment to moment hurly-burly life,” as she once described the early years of her Catholic Worker efforts. “I always had work to do, and besides; I reminded him I was not a complete stranger to looking inside myself, to questioning myself.” Still, Maurin pressed her for a more specific contemplative acknowledgment on both of their parts—a moral routine, a considered moral self-examination.

Of what kind? She had, finally, asked him that question. He wanted to institutionalize a kind of shared and formal conversation on their

part with respect to moral leadership—to do so in a humble, streetwise way that contrasts instructively with the endowed institutes, and their curricula and seminars that are the vehicle for various ethics programs in our universities. “Time for a walk,” he’d tell her, with a serious look. She knew then that he had “business on his mind.” She knew then that he wanted to “look down the road,” and also “look back,” examine what had happened, see if they’d not fallen short in certain important respects. So the two often set out, kept moving, gabbed and gabbed, wore out the leather. Sometimes they lost all sense of time and place—not in self-absorption, but quite the opposite: a forthright discussion of “ideals and practicalities,” as she described it, quickly letting me know of a borrowed phrase: Peter had often used those words to get them going, to give their moral agenda a brief delineation of sorts.

Dilemmas of Leadership: “Serpents and Doves”

She remembered many dilemmas of leadership—the tension between high purposes and their daily, attempted realization. The refrain “serpents and doves” (the polarity of shrewd calculation against innocence) echoed in her ears as she went about her chores and thought of new directions. She had always been a dreamer and an idealist, if not a moralist, but now she had to be constantly pragmatic. How to get food for a soup kitchen? How to pay the bills for a place where she and others lived and worked? How to keep a newspaper going—attend the costs and, as well, the attitudes and concerns of those who worked on it? How to present one’s views to others in that larger world of the press, the universities, the Church as an institution with its own cultural and political life? When to say what to whom, and why? She could be ever so candid with herself, and sometimes quite forthcoming with certain others; but she could also be terse, tight-lipped—and she knew to worry on both counts, because she had learned that some would take her words, her confidences, and use them for their own purposes, and others would respond to her silences with the noise of irritation or with an unexpressed, longer-lasting resentment.

All the while she had to carry on a conversation with herself, remind herself of this, tell herself that, pat herself on the back for one thing, re-monstrate with herself for something else. Now she wasn't creating characters in her head for a fiction, or taking note of real-life people for a piece of nonfiction, but living and working with men and women, who played off against one another in ways she knew how to describe as a writer but in this new life had to encourage or discourage. Not rarely she was too fast on the draw—she spotted trouble right away, maybe even saw it around some corner, but didn't have the patience, the psychological or practical know-how, that would have kept her annoyance or bitterness or disapproval under wraps so that a natural rhythm of talk, of human engagement, would gradually iron out a particular-emotional wrinkle.

In one of the last talks I had with her, in 1974 in New York City, as I was trying to learn of her life, her beliefs, her sense of what she had accomplished, and what she had hoped to do but hadn't, she was frank to speak of what it means to be held up high by others, even as one lives with plenty of self-doubt, not to mention an ounce or two of self-accusation. She was also ready to reflect upon what moral leadership requires of one and, of course, what it means to those who seek it, and find it, in others. Gradually, through "the college of hard knocks," she had acquired an education: some knowledge about how to work with others, and a sense of how to inspire them, while at the same time developing a capacity to be inspired by them—affirmed by their willingness to be attentive.

"For the longest time," she remembered, "the word 'leader' never entered my mind. We all had a 'leader': He was Jesus. That is what I'd say to myself, but to be honest, I'd have to admit that I wasn't being so honest with myself. I knew there are cardinals and bishops and priests, and of course the pope, so it's not only Jesus, it's His designates, I guess you could call them, here on earth: they're our leaders. The same holds for all of us who aren't in the Church's hierarchy. We have our commitments, and we find people who represent them for us: they're 'stand-in' folks for us; they represent what we believe, in a different way a priest or a bishop does for our secular life. I mean, I know a

lawyer who admired Learned Hand, the federal judge—he'd go to court to hear the judge, and he had no reason, as a lawyer, to [do so]. He told me he needed to 'check in' with Judge Hand—needed to get a 'boost' from him. I asked my friend why, and he told me that he needed to have someone to look up to, a believable moral figure, and Judge Hand was it for him. His trips to the judge's courtroom were a pilgrimage, I realized.

Learned Hand in Dorothy Day's Mind, and in Life

"Sometimes I'd catch myself thinking of Judge Hand! I'd wonder what he was really like. I'd wonder whether he lived up to his reputation. I'd wonder who *he* admired—and if he ever sought someone out, the way my lawyer friend did. I'd wonder what Judge Hand would think if he knew of that lawyer, sitting there in the courtroom, looking at him, looking up to him. I wondered whether the judge would be embarrassed or worried or pleased—maybe all three! I wondered if he'd be spurred to be a better judge that day, to pay closer attention to what was going on in his courtroom, because of that 'audience of one'—to speak more thoughtfully, even to be eloquent! Judges 'perform,' after all—so do we all, I've come to understand."

Here she stopped for a moment, took a sip of tea, looked away, her eyes half closed and registering obvious psychological withdrawal from the immediate setting. Soon enough, she was apologizing for the lull in her expressed train of thought—and pointing out the reason: she was certainly not an eminent and silver-tongued jurist whose erudition and penetrating brilliance, whose very name, summoned in others regard and deference, homage and adulation. But she knew what it was to be sought out, held in high esteem, even venerated—and she shuddered, in retrospect, at her own unawareness that such was her moral relationship to certain individuals. She returned to Judge Hand, to that word "perform": she circled around it warily. She wondered aloud whether she had made a mistake in saying that she was "performing"—

the word had a connotation of the superficial. Moreover, if she had been a performer in the course of her duties, she'd "mostly" been "unaware" of what she'd been doing.

She had, in fact, learned that Judge Hand was himself a lover of Shakespeare, and also an amateur performer—eager to take roles in small, informal plays, put on at home by family members or friends. A grandson of the judge's, Robert Jordan, was an actor, and she had met him—and was thereby told of Learned Hand's "attractive personality." Her memory of what she heard lit her up as she spoke: "He could be mischievous, his grandson said—he had a great sense of humor, and he loved reading poetry, and, of course, he went back to Shakespeare again and again, 'the well of wisdom.' Mr. Jordan said, speaking of both the playwright and the federal judge: I think I've admired Learned Hand for his principled decency, but also for his wisdom; he knew how to share it, everyone tells me, in his decisions, his writing—and he was not an arrogant man, for all his brilliance. That's a big achievement in life, to rise to the top and not become all full of yourself! His grandson said he was 'never stuffy or pretentious.' I still remember those words! There's the biggest achievement, to be learned (to be Learned Hand!) and to be a 'genial, kindly man,' and I recall those words well, too [of Hand's grandson]. There's the ultimate, I thought—to impress people and not be impressed with yourself! There's a moral triumph—to avoid confusing yourself with a pedestal, when you're on one, and with people!"

After a few minutes of what she herself called "stalling," she said, "I think if you're a leader to people, you'll know it in your bones, if you don't already know it in your head—and maybe then you must try hard to be modest, the way Judge Hand was. I think people like me can be in danger—we need to learn from the judge, and not get carried away with ourselves, lose ourselves in the admiring eyes of others.

"I confessed once to a priest the sin of pride: people were asking me what to do, telling me I should tell them what to do, as if I was—as if I'm their priest. But the priest didn't seem bothered one bit. I've been to confession hundreds of times, but I can still remember what I heard that time: the priest said, 'Of course, people will find other people to

look up to, and be priestly in their lives.' That word 'priestly' really stuck in my thoughts: I guess I was reassured; I'd been given permission to think out loud (to myself) that I wasn't some fraud, misleading people into believing I had an official position in the Church!

"I was constantly worrying that I'd say something 'misleading.' I'm surprised someone didn't tell me I was a worrywart on that account! I can eavesdrop right now on some of our [*Catholic Worker* editorial] meetings—I was always saying, 'Let's not be misleading!' 'Dorothy,' Peter once exclaimed, 'you're being misleading when you keep warning us about being misleading!' He was always like that—he'd pick up on what you'd say, and turn the coin over! But he didn't succeed with me, not then: I kept expressing my real fear that we'd take people down the garden path. I suppose that was my way of admitting that I was 'the camp director,' as we used to say when I was a girl—the one 'in charge.' You see, *Christ* was 'in charge': that was our faith, *is*. But Peter well knew that he and I were also functioning as leaders, even if we kept insisting (to ourselves as much as to others) that everyone was 'equal,' and a member in good standing of the 'community.' "

"In my thinking, I was the same loner, and if I had friends and lots of people near me, here at the *Worker*, I was still alone in my thinking of myself (except for Tamar, of course). I'd learned how to be a mother—and remember, a mother is a leader, too! But I hadn't in my mind become a mother to our den!

"I recall Peter giving me one of his private sermons. 'You know, Dorothy'—he always started that way—'every opportunity is a risk, so we've got to make sure all this works. You're the one who has to take the lead a lot, and we'll all be with you!'

"I recall telling a friend from my old Greenwich Village life that I was 'in an organization now'—a big contrast with our anarchist days, and I had to worry about paying bills, and I had to mediate when people didn't get along, and I had to decide what to say about *this* or *that*: 'You're our spokesman,' they'd all say! Well, my friend told me I should go study political science, and learn about 'leadership.' Lord, *that* got me going! I dropped out of college, and now they were sending me back to college! Plato, Machiavelli, Max Weber—I said yes, yes, I'll

buy them and read them. I'd heard them mentioned for years by people at cocktail parties or during those intense arguments in the Village—talk about struggles for 'leadership!' Everyone seemed to know how to quote from them or how to appear to know what they'd proposed in their books, and those of us who'd never read a word from any of those books had learned to nod and seem right in there, pitching! Once I told Mike Gold [a writer friend and political activist] that I hadn't read a word of Marx, I think it was, or maybe it was Freud, but I'd absorbed their ideas reading about them, or listening to people talk about them. He told me to stick with Dickens and Dostoyevsky, my great loves! But it was different, once I was 'responsible for others'—that's what Peter kept telling me, and I didn't like those three words. They made me feel inadequate and nervous and very frightened. For a few weeks there I was reading [college] catalogues, trying to find courses that would help me be better at my job. If I was supposed to take 'responsibility for others,' I wanted to know how wise people in the past said you should do it. That friend who talked of my 'leadership role' said there are 'techniques,' and I almost believed her! To be honest, I think I was saved by my inadequacies—I'd have gone uptown to Morningside Heights [Columbia] or nearer here, to NYU [New York University], if I wasn't so overwhelmed trying to beg for the food we cooked [in her soup kitchen] and keeping up with our schedule for the paper. There was never enough time even as it was—I thought that if I left a couple of afternoons or evenings, it would put a big burden on others, and things wouldn't be working as well as before: I'd be studying 'leadership,' but I would be flunking it at the same time!"

Still, she had found time, all along, to notice what *wasn't* working especially well, or was turning out disastrously. She spoke of "keeping a notebook" in her memory, storing up "incidents," which she'd contemplate as she was trying to fall asleep, or when she woke up, suddenly; trembling with anxiety, or in a state of full awareness otherwise denied her by the headlong rush of a busy life. In the light of morning she tried to retain thoughts, oughts and naughts, that had grabbed her so tellingly during the preceding darkness, but to no avail. There was her daughter, Tamar, to attend; there were all those vulnerable souls,

called "guests," jobless and ever so needy, to feed and clothe, to help find shelter or get medical care; there was newspaper copy to read and edit. Again and again she and her compatriots stopped to pray, to consider a certain passage from, say, Matthew or Luke or Mark—but then, the approaching deadline of the noon meal for the long line of hungry ones or the schedule for sending newspaper copy to the printer would demand all eyes and ears. "We forgot intention in favor of action sometimes," she lamented; but she qualified that melancholy assessment with these words: "On the other hand, I guess we hoped in our hearts that our ideals were being expressed in the way we behaved with one another, and with the people we served."

She was frank to admit that such was not always the case. Looking back to the 1930s and 1940s and 1950s, she could all too clearly recall failures of omission and commission—times when sharp words and hard feelings made her and others feel at a loss. Often on those occasions she thought back to Peter Maurin's various exhortations of her, his pestering of her through a conviction that she was a "leader," and ought assert herself as such, "a leader of principle and of principles." Nor did Dorothy Day ever really deny to herself the reasons for such an assertion on the part of her close associate and friend. She knew what she'd got going, and she also knew that the very fact that Maurin kept asking her to do things, kept suggesting things for her to do, kept wondering when she'd do things, spoke to her ultimate leadership even with respect to him, never mind all those others who worked with the two of them and regarded themselves as followers—thought themselves staff members on the paper, coworkers in the soup kitchen or on the breadline, fellow picketers or hawkers selling *The Catholic Worker*, daily, rather than *The Daily Worker*: a Christian communitarianism taking on a secular communism. But she also knew something else, knew it in the way troubled people know their troubles, sinners their sins: in her bones or gut rather than in the frontal lobes of her brain. Repeatedly she remarked upon the particular pleasure a hectic life at the *Worker* gave to her: no time at all to be stopped in her tracks by an abrupt surge of self-recognition that in the past could wear her down, overgroom her. "I would hear in my voice a warning sign—I'd notice

the tone before the words," she remembered; and then a quite localized consciousness: "I'd always think of my right forefinger, that it was itching to start wagging!"

The Danger of Self-righteousness

Righteousness becoming self-righteousness was, for her, a danger, a reason for self-arraignment, if not outright despair. She was exhilarated when she had managed to get a deeply or urgently felt point across without stooping to impatience or haughtiness. Sometimes she had tried preventative action, had almost consciously clothed her high-and-mighty side in the garb of deference. She'd asked for opinions, recommendations, and suggestions, even as she was not unable to notice that those so beseeched were themselves only too eager to hear *her* thoughts, and yes, follow her lead. Perhaps at times they fell silent because they saw the truth in her eyes, the fierce determination that both informed her ideas and prompted her attempts to elicit theirs; but often, she fully realized, those men and women genuinely looked up to her, understood what she believed, and themselves believed what she did. In their own way they knew to ask: *who* is without sin? In their own way they knew that pride can affirm itself in a scrupulosity of self-examination that goes (egoistically) berserk, that detaches such self-observation from common sense.

In a wonderfully tactful ode of sorts to Dorothy Day, her longtime friend Frank Donovan, who worked steadfastly at her side in the Catholic Worker Movement community, made these comments on her moral leadership, its strengths and its vulnerabilities: "You've got to remember that Dorothy was shy—the way some very strong-willed people are! I remember her coming into the room, and when she really wanted to get something done she'd walk tall and straight, but when she had her doubts, when she wasn't sure, she'd be a little stooped, and it was then that she'd want us to have our say, and she'd even apologize for not asking us sooner. I'm not saying that she wasn't genuinely interested in what we could contribute. She really did pay attention to us.

I could see on her face her *own* worries. But she had a second or third sense to her—she knew when to call the troops in and have a go-around! I can hear her saying that—"It's time for a go-around!"

A Leader in Action

Frank Donovan was headed for important psychological and intellectual territory, but not the kind easy to explore with confidence and precision. He was describing a leader very much in action—when she was of two minds, she instinctively bent her ear more readily, addressed her qualms through a hearing of other sentiment. He rejected calculation on her part, favored an alternative: a moral intuition that triggered conversational inquiry—a leader deliberately linking herself to those who, reciprocally, rely upon her judgment, her sense of what matters as much as what to do. To call upon Donovan once more: "I never saw Dorothy more devoutly, even passionately Catholic than when she was trying to do something that was hard, or something that made her concerned, because she saw several sides of the issue. You could see her going through the wringer, putting herself through [it]; she tried being careful and weighing every consideration possible on her own, or she tried getting us to do that with her—but at a certain point (we all knew it had come when she'd start looking for her Bible, or if she already had it in her hands, she'd hold it tighter, or look at it for a second, maybe) there was a shift in her, on her face or in her voice. She'd stop analyzing and start praying—and then [after prayers] she'd say that if we end up failing, we'd at least have tried, and *that* would be a great success."

Moral Success: A Leader's Voyage Within

He was referring, of course, to *moral success*—a leader whose mind balanced the things of this world with the ethical mandates handed down by a church in the name of God. That was why, after she'd taken counsel with others, as described by Frank Donovan, she always asked them

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to pray with her—and this was no fleeting bow to piety. Rather, she became, by her own oft-mentioned description, “lost in prayer.” Occasionally she immersed herself so intently in such a mix of supplication and self-directed ethical inquiry that she woke up, so to speak, seeing others quietly, politely awaiting her return: a leader’s voyage within, and subsequently, a signal or two meant to indicate what had been discovered.

Frank, one last time: “We knew when to wait on Dorothy, and we knew when she’d made up her mind—and we knew she’d only gradually know, herself, what she’d concluded, so we didn’t try to push things. It was as if all of us, Dorothy included, were slowly going to find our way, moment by moment and step by step. If all this sounds mysterious, or maybe mystical, then I’m afraid that’s as close to it as I can come—the way we came together and made decisions, and then got ourselves organized to act on them.”

To that last observation, Dorothy would add, *did* add, what Peter had sometimes virtually whispered, sometimes exclaimed: “God’s ways aren’t ours—but we have to find our ways to do His bidding.”

When she put that aphorism before me she was trying to sort out, for my benefit, her approach to *choice*, to *decision-making*, to *leadership*. I was bringing up those words, but she dealt with what they are meant to signify concretely, intuitively; she had a narrative and introspective reply to my conceptual inquiry. She often spoke of her “split personality,” her many experiences as a social and political activist that preceded her conversion to Catholicism—but thereafter, her life as one who went to church every morning, and sometimes in the afternoon or evening. Back then, churches were open all the time in Manhattan, and she would seek them out, one after the other. She had her favorites, and she went to them for aesthetic pleasure as well as spiritual uplift. When her mind had to contend with problems in the Catholic Worker Movement community (clashes of personality or opinion, disagreements with respect to what ought be done, when, and how), she listened impassively and, to some, inscrutably. She often seemed to hold her own counsel, at least for a while. But invariably she took the matter to prayer in church as well as in the privacy of her spare and small

room. Peter had encouraged her to talk openly to God, and she did so—most forthrightly when she had the whole church to herself, so she could speak out loud without bothering or alarming others.

“It Wells Up in Me—A Notion”

Her occasional comments about those times at church tell a lot, I think, about a kind of moral leadership as it could “well up” (a phrase she used repeatedly) in a mind’s life, first, then be affirmed in connection with other lives: “Before I became a Catholic I’d planned protests, ‘street action,’ we called it, with my friends. We argued and argued about ‘approaches.’ I don’t look back with regret—they were fine people, their hearts in the right places and their minds awake and aware! But what we were doing—that was what we believed in; and so we were almost completely centered on techniques and strategies and tactics! Yes, we did have our broader values or ideals but they were in the back of our minds—or maybe I should just speak for myself, and say that’s how it was for me! Today, I have a different perspective of why I’m on this earth and what I should do, and that’s why I encourage all of us to make God a part of what we do, bring God into the midst of our ‘decision-making,’ as you called it, bring Him right here, as much as we can. It would be absurd if we didn’t, after all—this is ‘action offered to God’: what Peter kept saying when people asked him what we’re doing here!

“That is why I’m always mindful of prayer when we talk and plan and hope and dream and worry—when we try to think of ways to do our work better, to reach more people, to prove our beliefs worthwhile by living them out as fully as we can. Of course we disagree, but we have to keep remembering who we are and why we’re here. ‘That’s your job,’ Peter once told me, and he’s right, I guess, though I’d like to think it’s a job we all have: to keep our moral wits about us! So, I listen, and I go to church, and I remember what I’ve heard, and I think of Jesus, and how He lived His life, and what He told the people He met, and the ones who became His followers, and I sit there, and then it

wells up in me, that's as close as I can get to saying what happens, it wells up in me—you could call it a 'notion' of what should happen.

"I like that word, 'notion'—to me it means something modest and personal, not a big idea that someone thought up that explains everything. God has given us that, the big idea, and it's up to us to respond to God in our different ways, with our notions. There have been times that I've not known what to think—and then I pray, and I tell God what I think the issues are that are before us, and I sit there, and I hope He'll help me out. Sitting there on a bench, looking up, I'll feel some answer coming to me, a notion of what we should do welling up. Then I go tell my friends what's happened."

Not that she didn't have more to do thereafter. Those "friends" had, still, their various positions or sides to uphold, their out-and-out arguments to make. Once she'd figured out the particular direction to pursue, she became more talkative, more confident, really, of what she had to say, and so more willing to use words to spell out a point of view. This contrast between an earlier relative silence and a later entrance of sorts into the conversation at hand (sometimes, more tensely, a joining of the fray) did not, of course, go unnoticed by her colleagues. By no means did they necessarily buckle under, right away or even eventually. Nor did she prevail every time. She was one of many, she insisted; and that, for her, was the biggest accomplishment of all—to have gone from Peter and her, in tandem, musing and hoping, all the way to that newspaper and those hospitality houses, in which the men and women labored and lived in "a community of souls," as Peter and she both put it. But no one doubted her singular importance or failed to recognize her moral earnestness as it found its way to expression; and everyone knew how that happened—her trips to church, her burdened and concerned and sometimes vexed stay there, her efforts to find her ethical way there, her return with words that seemed just a bit amplified by that sitting in a pew, that recitation of religious commonplaces, and that outpouring of a mind's remembered points of view as they have been previously uttered and are now assembled in a narrative of a kind that is presented mutely or quite audibly to another, who is the Other—God. Once she'd left those churches, ended those encounters, she was very

much on her own; soon enough her friends would receive the news she felt she had received; *her* news, mind you, as she had presented it to the Lord. The hope, on her part, was that those friends would do likewise, and they did: lots of prayers that preceded various arguments and outcomes—the devil wrestled constantly and, needless to say, only with partial success. But to know of the devil (our potentially harmful egoistic assertiveness, as it "wells up"), to take, as a consequence, explicit reflective steps, a kind of anticipatory action aimed at blunting an inevitable psychological moral threat, is an achievement all its own: the Almighty Other embraced, and thereby, in the Lord's name, a life lived in tandem with Peter Maurin, and with all those others (colleagues or followers in moral want, even as the street's people were in physical want) to whom she and he came to mean so much in all manner of ways.