

# Dorothy Day's Movement Seen Still Growing

By Tracy Early

New York (NC) — Two years after the death of Dorothy Day, the Catholic Worker movement she led not only survives but shows signs of gaining strength.

An unstructured lay operation with diverse and often intangible ties to many individuals and groups, it cannot be measured in precise terms. But circulation of its penny newspaper grows, new hospitality houses keep opening across the country, and financial support holds steady.

Through the years, Miss Day and her associates were active at various locations in

lower Manhattan. In 1967 they bought St. Joseph House in a lower East Side area that attracted hippies as it had drawn immigrants and others seeking low rents. In 1974 they got an additional, larger building, Maryhouse, nearby.

People are still volunteering to live in these houses and give themselves full time to the Catholic Worker life, including sheltering the homeless, feeding the hungry, distributing used clothing and performing other "works of mercy." Some who do not live in the houses come in to help.

Eileen Egan, a former staff member of Catholic Relief

Services now in semi-retirement writing its history, has her own apartment but has been closely aligned with the movement since the 1960s. "For the last two or three years of Miss Day's life, she was very weak, so there was a natural transition," Miss Egan said. "The work has taken up by whoever was here."

Assessing the current influence of Miss Day, Miss Egan recalled that she sponsored the group that became the U.S. affiliate of the international Catholic peace organization, Pax Christi. The Catholic peace movement owes more to Miss Day than to any other individual, Miss Egan said. "The ideas that Dorothy Day pioneered — Gospel nonviolence, working with the poor, living simply, direct action for social justice, going to jail as a witness — these have all become part of the church," she said.

No one person ever emerged as a natural successor to head the Catholic Worker movement after Miss Day, but a key figure now is Peggy Scherer, a short, slender young woman who edits The Catholic Worker, the newspaper of the movement, and coordinates other activities.

"I'm from Cincinnati and was with the Peace Workers, a pacifist network with a Gandhian base," she says. "In 1974 we had a seminar at the Catholic Worker farm at Tivoli (N.Y.) and I decided to stay, mainly because of the movement's spiritual base."

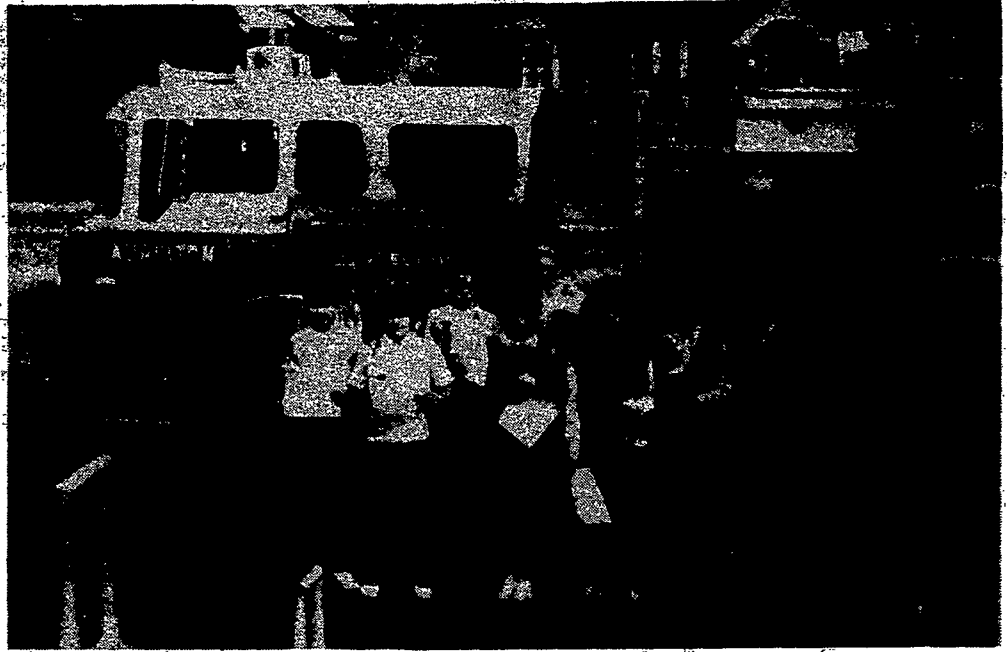
Miss Day was born in Brooklyn on Nov. 8, 1897, and as a young woman became part of a Greenwich Village circle devoted to radical politics and bohemian personal life. Though baptized an Episcopalian, she had little to do with religion until the birth of a daughter in 1927. She then converted to Catholicism, which led to a break-up of her common law marriage.

A journalist, she supported herself by writing for periodicals such as Commonweal, a national lay-run Catholic magazine. Covering a 1932 hunger march in Washington, she felt challenged anew by the zeal of communists and other radicals, and at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception prayed for guidance in how she might serve the workers with equal devotion as a Catholic.

On her return to New York she met a man who showed her the way she would follow until she died in her room at Maryhouse Nov. 29, 1980.

He was Peter Maurin, a sort of peasant philosopher from France who was influenced by the "personalism" of Emmanuel Mounier. Advocating an approach neither communist or capitalist, Maurin called for Christians to serve the poor personally, rather than depend on organized charities or government.

Houses of hospitality for this purpose were opened in New York and also in other cities. Each house functions independently, with local workers opening or closing houses according to local conditions.



## Essay Contest Winners

Above, students from St. Ambrose and St. James Schools were among winners in the Laurelton Fire Department's Fire Prevention Essay Contest. They are (left to right): Scott Kress, Joseph Spadoni, Bill Dougherty, Jeanna Lobozzo, Philip Farchione, Laurie Trovato, St. Ambrose; Julie Hofmann, Marita Vieira, St. James; and their respective principals, Sister Ann Collins and Sister Helen Lynch. St. Salome School winners in the Point Pleasant Fire Prevention Essay Contest are (below, left to right): Trina Stiehler, Carl Provenzano, Carlos Gonzalez, Pam Davis and Scott O'Bine. With the children are fire department representatives and teacher Miss Mary Bartholomay.



Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

## The Food Of Home

From Hong Kong to Newark Valley and Catatunk is a bit of a leap. A month before our tour to the Orient, Father Ralph Fraats invited me to care for his parishes Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 6 and 7, while he made a Cursillo. Though it would be only four days after our return from Hong Kong, I was happy for the invitation.

It is a territory I hardly know — and hardly anyone else in the diocese does either. The parishes are near Owego and Apalachin. In 1940, my Ithaca pastor, Father William Byrne, took me to Owego for the funeral of a Mrs. Mooney, saying, "She is nearly 90 years old and has been blind for years. She kept the faith alive by gathering the few Catholics in the vicinity in her home in Candor each Sunday. The rosary was recited. The epistle and gospel of the Sunday were read. And a passage from Goffine's 'Devout Life' was read in lieu of a sermon."

Later, Polish farmers settled in the area and established churches in Newark Valley and Catatunk. The names of the pastors — Fathers Klejna, Stec, Siudara, Donovan, and (the recently transferred to Palmyra) Weis — are still held in benediction by the people.

Jet lag from the oriental return gave way to a kind of exhilaration at the prospects of new people and a new territory. So on Saturday morning, off from Webster to Auburn, 65 miles en route. I stopped at Sacred Heart rectory, where Father Nangle phoned Fathers Bob Egan and Joseph McNamara at Groton to invite myself for lunch, reaching the impressive St. Anthony's parish at noon. Alice Kahabka, the lovely cook, provided a fine lunch.

One of the hardest things filling in for the first time in a parish is to find the right keys and light switches. Father Fraats, whose character exudes detail and

order, had mailed me keys and directions. But every parish has a couple of anchor people a stranger can call on for help. So I phoned secretary Nancy Finch who came and checked on locks, heat switches, etc., so all was prepared for 5 p.m. Saturday Mass. I have found few parishes where people participate and sing with such enthusiasm.

A special this weekend was the monthly "coffee and doughnuts." Adjoining the church is a spacious hall. The youth group, directed by Marty Bennett, took a 50-pound sack of doughnut mix, made their own doughnuts — frosted, sugared or plain — sold them by the dozen to take out, or singles to munch with coffee and friends in the hall. It brought nearly half the parishioners together, after the Masses.

Catatunk is like a doll church: beautiful, petite, seating less than 100 persons. This has been quite a Polish parish. Before the 7:30 Saturday night Mass, I was greeting people as they got seated. Three sturdy men in their 50s sat together wearing almost identical jackets. In my best Polish I beamed, "Jak Idzie?" ("How goes it?") They looked pleasantly blank at the greeting. Later it dawned on me that they were not parishioners, but hunters for the deer season, and looked a lot like a Murphy, O'Brien and Klem. I was happy to meet Bertha and Peter Winnick who went to the Holy Land with us in 1979.

After last Mass next day, housekeeper Julie Tomazin and family invited me to their home for lasagna and a glorious piece of apple pie. As I admired the pictures of their fine grown children, I wondered sadly why none of those fine boys had gone for the priesthood. After brief stops in Ithaca and Geneva, home by 11, and got the TV news, went to bed, and came down with the meanest cold which married the delayed Oriental jet lag to make a wretched week. But it had been a fine weekend at beautiful Newark Valley and Catatunk. My great thanks to Father Fraats and his parishioners.

## 3 ME Weekends Planned

Married couples are invited to a weekend experience sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter.

Three such weekends are planned: Jan. 21-23 and March 11-13 at Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua, and Feb. 4-6 at Brockport SUNY.

The weekends are open to any married couple and are aimed at making good marriages better through increased couple communication. Further information and reservations are available from Jim and Laura Griffen, (716) 381-5930.

## Drivers Needed

Volunteer drivers are needed to help the Christmas Bureau to distribute cheer baskets and gifts for elderly and infirm persons in the Rochester area from 8 to 11 a.m., Friday, Dec. 17. Each volunteer will deliver about 10 small packages, taking about one hour. Anyone interested should call 271-0868 between 9 and 5.

## Deadline

Items intended for At Your Parish should be typed, double-spaced and at the Courier-Journal offices before noon on the Thursday preceding Wednesday publication.

**DONALD J. MEEHAN**  
Retired U. S. Internal Revenue Agent  
**Public Accountant**  
Member National Society of Public Accountants  
Announces his Availability for  
**AUDITS • BOOKKEEPING**  
**• COMPLETE TAX SERVICES**  
Individual • Partnership • Corporation  
120 Princess Dr. 334-1210 P.O. Box 92127  
Henrietta Rochester 14622

**THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER**

**EDWIN SULEWSKI**  
**FUNERAL DIRECTOR**  
"Favorite Things"

Each of us has a wealth of warm and beautiful memories we associate with the Christmas Season... our own "favorite things." Delicious warm smells from the kitchen... the fun of surprising those we love... mistletoe... holly... caroling... colored lights and all the dozens of special feelings we enjoy so much this time of year. The beauty and warmth of the season can be even more meaningful to us if we share it with someone who may very much need our love and friendship. If someone you know recently lost a loved one, the Christmas season will be especially difficult for them. The rest of the world glows with a special warmth — at a time they feel they have lost much of their love for life and hope for the future. Your concern — and sharing of the season — can help them find renewed faith in life. Sharing, giving, loving — these are a few of our "favorite things," and we wish them for you now... and during the coming year.

"Merry Christmas"

**SCHAUMAN FUNERAL HOME**  
2100 St. Paul St. 342-3488