

Bishops praise memory of Day's love of the poor

HINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. bishops' Committee on Domestic Policy has praised Dorothy Day for her prophetic love for the poor.

In a statement marking the 100th anniversary of Day's birth on Nov. 8, the bishops said the late peace activist and co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement was "a woman whose life was rooted in her commitment to her Catholic faith, to prayer and sacraments."

The statement was issued by Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., who chairs the committee. It was released in Washington Oct. 29.

Day's "faith found expression in her recognition that our salvation is utterly dependent on how we serve Christ present in the poor and oppressed," the statement said. "This became her life's work."

The bishops said it was the combination of her faith and work that helped create the Catholic Worker movement in 1933.

Day, then an idealistic young journalist, co-founded the movement with Peter Maurin, a sort of peasant philosopher from France. He had been a Christian brother, teacher and homesteader in Canada, who taught that time should be set aside for "clarification of thought."

Day's collaboration with Maurin in Depression-era New York City was chronicled in the 1996 film "Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story," produced by Paulist Pictures.

When the movie was released, Henry Herx, director of the Office for Film and Broadcasting of the U.S. Catholic Conference, said: "Rather than recount the remarkable achievements of her later years, the movie centers on the young Dorothy Day as she struggled to understand herself and what she should do with her life."

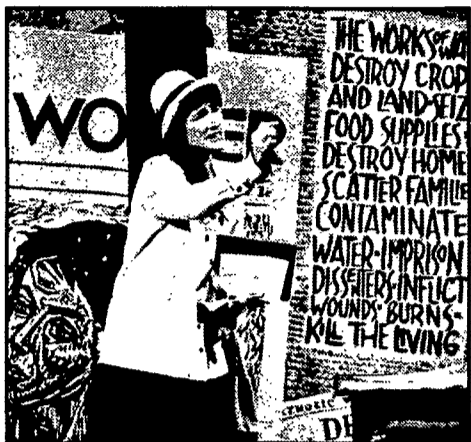
Her early experiences included an abortion, a period of withdrawal to Staten Island, the birth of her daughter, Tamar, and the subsequent baptism of mother and daughter as members of the Catholic faith.

Day later became internationally known for her commitment to peace and justice, made visible in her activism and the establishment of houses of hospitality for the poor where she and many others lived with them in voluntary poverty.

The woman whom many considered a secular saint during her lifetime died in 1980 at the Catholic Worker's Maryhouse in New York.

Today at more than 140 Catholic Worker houses in the United States and 10 others abroad, the homeless still are sheltered, the hungry fed and the cause of the poor defended.

In addition, members of the movement continue to gather weekly, on Friday nights, for talks and discussions that honor Maurin's teaching. Recent topics in-



CNS/Catholic Herald

Lisa Wagner portrays Dorothy Day in the one-woman play "Haunted by God" during a Marquette University conference commemorating Day in Milwaukee. The Oct. 9-11 conference was held to mark the 100th anniversary of Day's birth Nov. 8.

cluded: the struggle of Nike workers in Indonesia; rediscovering Mary; global non-violence since 1989; philosopher Martin Heidegger and technology; and saints for today.

In their statement on the Day centenary, the bishops said, "Her vision of homes open to the lame, the weak and the blind is an ongoing reality because of her work and inspiration."

According to the statement, the Catholic Worker movement "offers an opportunity to the poor and those who serve them to experience the abundance of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy."

In calling Day's love prophetic, the bishops said it challenged others "to serve the poor and the oppressed while at the same time confronting the system which caused the poverty and oppression."

They said Day "recognized that the Gospel calls us to a more abundant way of life than does a culture rooted in violence and indifference which pits one group against another."

Day's life and works have been much celebrated this year. She was among the honorees recognized in March for National Women's History Month. She also was the focus of a recent three-day conference at Milwaukee's Marquette University, which houses her papers and Catholic Worker records.

In a 1996 interview with Catholic News Service, Eileen Egan, a retired Catholic Relief Services executive and co-founder of Pax Christi U.S.A., spoke of Day's influence on her during their long friendship.

Egan said Day described her work with the poor and outcast in terms of ministering to Jesus "in his distressing disguise," whatever it might be. "And Dorothy Day, for me, brought in the most distressing disguise of all: Jesus in the enemy," Egan recalled.

Author: Shroud is real

ROME (CNS) — A new book says the Shroud of Turin is neither a medieval fake nor a miraculous relic, but the natural, chemically produced image of the crucified Christ.

The author, Swiss archeologist Maria Grazia Siliato, said recent photo-computer analysis reveals a series of inscriptions on the cloth identifying the man as "Jesus-Nazarene."

"This represents archeological evidence that, on the cloth covering his body, the Roman authorities certified his identity, the death sentence and the fact that it was carried out," she said at a book presentation in Rome Oct. 30.

Her book is called *Shroud: The Mystery of the Image of 2,000 Years*.

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