

Servant of God Dorothy Day



1897–1980

Dorothy Day was born in New York, and came of age during a time when ideas about socialism and communism were spreading to the U.S. from Europe. Day became involved in socialist movements. After a series of failed relationships, she gave birth to a daughter.

Motherhood changed Day. She decided to have her daughter baptized in the Catholic Church. She went to Mass, read religious books, and became close with a Catholic nun. Her relationship with the “Church of the poor” grew. She was baptized at age 30.

Wishing to serve the poor and outcast, Dorothy and a friend founded the Catholic Worker movement in 1933. This group focused on living justly and serving the needs of others. She described the group’s mission as: “Our rule is the Works of Mercy... It is the way of sacrifice, worship, a sense of reverence.” She published *The Catholic Worker* newspaper to speak out against unjust working conditions, advocate peace, and spread Church teachings about social justice. This newspaper is still in circulation today.

Many viewed Day as a radical. But in truth, she lived out Christ’s command to comfort the afflicted through her commitment to Catholic teaching, active concern for the poor, and work for peace and justice.

It had been love of neighbor that first drew her to the ideas of socialism. But Day came to see that love and violence were incompatible. She wrote in 1951 that love of neighbor could never justify the forced labor, torture, and murder of millions that went on in China and the Soviet Union. Like many saints who lived their early lives in sin, Day was converted to Christ by the grace of God and accomplished great works of love and mercy. She is a Servant of God, the first step in the journey towards sainthood.

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