



Dorothy Day, (November 8, 1897 – November 29, 1980) was an American journalist, social activist, and devout Catholic convert. She advocated the Catholic economic theory of distributism. In the 1930s, Day worked closely with fellow activist Peter Maurin to establish the Catholic Worker Movement, a pacifist movement that continues to combine direct aid for the poor and homeless with nonviolent direct action on their behalf. She served as editor of the Catholic Worker newspaper from 1933 until her death in 1980. The Catholic Church has opened the cause for Day's canonization and therefore refers to her with the title Servant of God.

Dorothy Day's spirituality is marked by these characteristics:

Love of Scripture: Throughout her life, Dorothy received comfort and inspiration from the Bible, especially the Psalms, the Pauline writings, and the Gospels. They were part of her daily meditation, and scripture verses and images spontaneously wove themselves into her writings. The example and teachings of Christ were at the heart of her spirituality.

Solidarity with the Poor: In the Catholic Worker community, Dorothy shared her daily energies with and on behalf of poor people. Her writings, direct practice of the works of mercy, and her own voluntary poverty bound her to poor, homeless, sick, and desperate people.

Personalism: Dorothy loved doing works of mercy because they allowed her to take direct and immediate action for her brothers and sisters in Christ and against the ills of society that robbed them of their life, freedom, and dignity. Her engagement with other people flowed from her wholeness as a person; her heart and mind were cultivated through her reading, reflection, conversations, writing, and worship. She wanted the fullness of life for herself and every person.

Prophetic Witness: By her public words and work, Dorothy sought to imitate Christ's witness against injustice, even when such witness seemed folly. Like Christ, she was critical of the powers and structures of injustice and endured ridicule and opposition for her witness.

Peacemaking: A steadfast pacifist, Dorothy opposed all wars and the use of force and violence to solve human problems. She practiced and promoted human dignity with the spiritual weapons of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, civil disobedience, and works of amendment. Like Jesus, the woman at the well, and Saint Paul, she took her message to the people in the streets.

A Sacramental Sense: Dorothy looked to sacramental celebrations, especially the Eucharist, for daily spiritual sustenance, and she saw the world, its people and all of nature, to be full of God's grandeur and love as well.

Gratitude: In good times and in bad, Dorothy had a keen sense of appreciation and learned to trust in the providence of God. Dorothy regularly expressed gratitude not only to God but to those around her and to The Catholic Worker's readers.

