

from all but a few clergy, and she never allowed them to cast a pall on her cheerful performance or to grow into a physical or mental debility (as in clinical depression). She eventually accepted the dour darkness as a longing for God and a sign of solidarity with her rejected poor. In 1979 her heroic work was honored with the Nobel Prize for Peace. By the time she was in her late eighties, Mother Teresa's missionaries labored in 77 countries, many of them well beyond the borders of Christendom.

Kolodiejchuk includes considerable material on Mother Teresa's observations of affluent countries and their moral and social ills. Her famous speech on abortion reverberated

around the globe: "I feel the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a direct war, a direct killing, direct murder by the mother herself," and "I find the unborn child to be the poorest of the poor today — the most unloved — the most unwanted, the throwaway of the society." She identified poverty in social and spiritual manifestations, beaming in on the unwanted and uncared-for in wealthy communities.

The central concern surrounding this bittersweet book, of course, is the publication of material that Mother Teresa offered in confidence to her superiors. She repeatedly begged for her personal correspondence to be destroyed, and her words indicated hope that her requests would be hon-

ored. Readers may struggle to understand why her personal shroud of anguish is now laid bare before a world so voyeuristic that even the most innocuous thoughts, words, and deeds of famous people are savaged by misinterpretations. Kolodiejchuk sums up his justifications for denying Mother Teresa's requests for privacy in this sentence: "Her spiritual directors decided to preserve these documents for future generations, offering a precious testimony of Mother Teresa's unique holiness." This may be so, but such a position pales beside the majesty of a singular truth: It is by her fruits that we have known her, and it is by her fruits that future generations will fully receive her precious testimony. *Requiescat in pace.* ■

THOMAS STORCK

THE TRADITIONAL CATHOLIC WORKER MOVEMENT

The Catholic Worker Movement: Intellectual and Spiritual Origins. By Mark and Louise Zwick. *Paulist.* 358 pages. \$29.95.

Most Catholics, I daresay, know little about Dorothy Day (1897-1980) and the Catholic Worker movement and *The Catholic Worker* newspaper she and Peter Maurin (1877-1949) founded in 1933. The Catholic Worker is one of the authentic Catholic movements to have originated in the Church in this country, and we need not agree with

every jot and tittle of Dorothy Day's thought to recognize that this movement is a solid expression of traditional Catholicism, rooted not in any political ideology but in the spirituality and thought of the Church.

The first thing necessary in examining the Catholic Worker is to jettison the common notion that all ideas and movements can be placed in one of two categories: liberal or conservative. So far from the truth is this that the liberal/conservative prism, through which so many view the world, in fact distorts the world

and forces us to distort people's ideas and actions to conform to this shallow way of looking at things. The thought of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, even when it might accidentally coincide with that of liberal secular thinkers, was always rooted

Thomas Storck is the author, most recently, of *Christendom and the West: Essays on Culture, Society and History.*

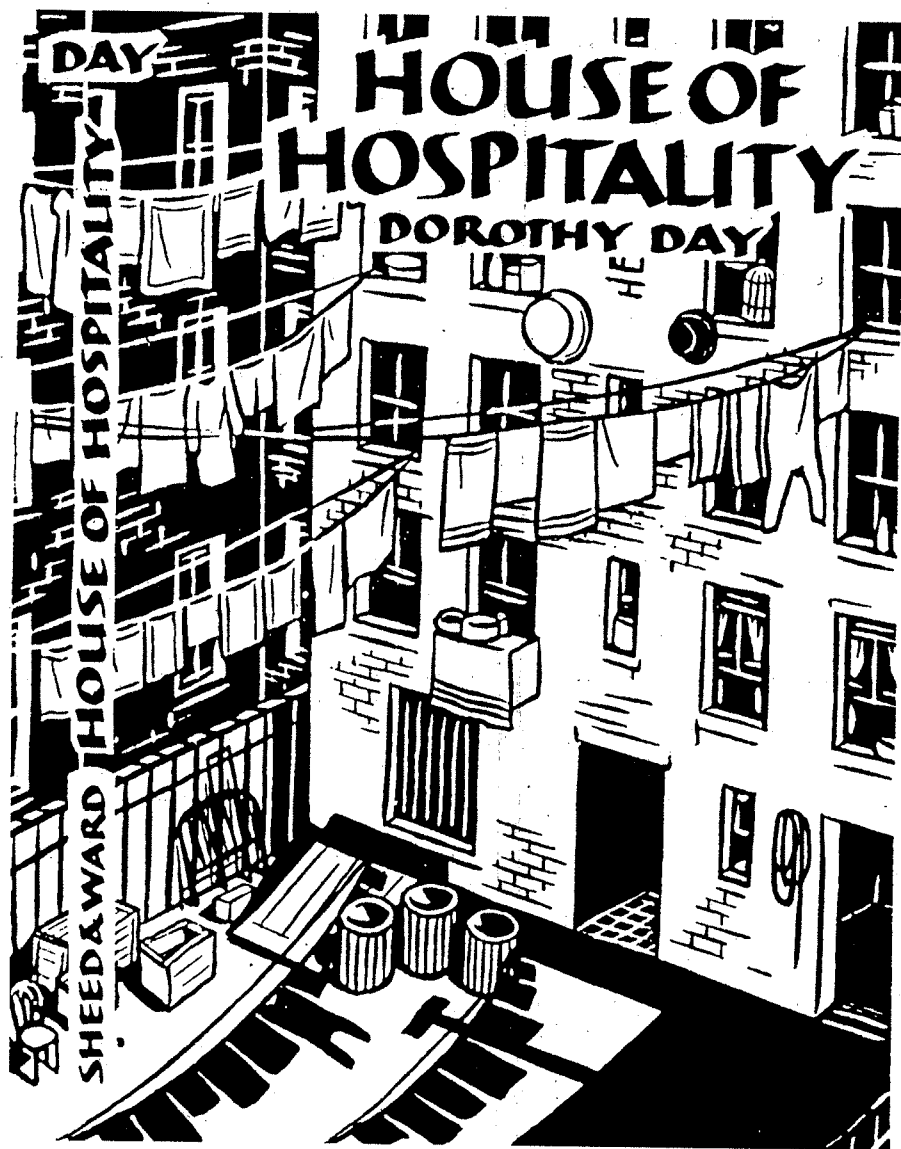
in an essentially spiritual vision of reality, in a knowledge of the existence of God and of the revelation that He made in Jesus Christ and in His Church.

In this book, Mark and Louise Zwick, founders of Casa Juan Diego, the Catholic Worker house in Houston, Texas, detail the various persons whose lives and thought influenced the founders of the Catholic Worker. Included are: St. Francis of Assisi, St.

Teresa of Avila, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, St. Catherine of Siena; several notable Catholic intellectuals: Dom Virgil Michel, Jacques and Raissa Maritain, Emmanuel Mounier; and two Russian Orthodox writers: the famous novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky and Nicholas Berdyaev. Other influences include medieval Irish and Benedictine monasticism and, of course, the social encyclicals of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI. The

Zwicks devote a chapter to each of these chief influences, quoting from both Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin's own writings, as well as from secondary sources about the Catholic Worker movement.

Many who have heard of Dorothy Day know her only as a pacifist; others have heard that she is a "radical," perhaps a communist. Both of these charges deserve discussion. Dorothy Day certainly was a pacifist, and here I admit that she departed from the central tradition of Catholic thought, which includes the teaching that a war of defense may be just. As someone who accepts this doctrine of the Church that a just war is theoretically possible, I was impressed when reading this book that Dorothy Day's pacifism was not so much an ideological position as a radical and personal embrace of the Gospel. That is, the words of Jesus Christ about love of enemy and accepting the injustices that others may impose on one made such an impression on Dorothy Day's heart that she was moved to a total rejection of war. When a young Catholic Worker asked her for a "clear, theological, logical pacifist manifesto," she could only reply: "I can write no other than this: unless we use the weapons of the Spirit, denying ourselves and taking up the Cross and following Jesus, dying with Him and rising with Him, men will go on fighting, and often from the highest motives, believing that they are fighting defensive wars for justice and in self-defense against present or future aggression." Dorothy Day's response was akin to that of a monk who might run out between the battle lines, calling upon each side to stop killing those created in God's image. Her pacifism was part of her response to following Jesus Christ,



*Ade Bethune Collection
College of St. Catherine
St. Paul, Minnesota*

indeed part of her own love for the person of our Blessed Lord.

This brings us to an aspect of the Catholic Worker that struck me as I read this book. Although Catholic Workers do not embrace the consecrated life, they do have a special vocation within the Church, a vocation which, like that of religious, stands as a witness to the radical demands of the Gospel, the call of our Lord to perfection, to turn the other cheek, love our enemies, and see Jesus Christ in the smallest of His brethren. As such, this specific vocation, though not meant for everyone, is one of the charisms that enriches the Body of Christ and, like the religious life, represents a radical living of the Gospel.

As for the charge that Dorothy Day was a communist, this is easily disposed of. Her economic thought, like that of Peter Maurin, was rooted in the papal social encyclicals, in the English distributists G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, and in the critique of modern economics made by so many Catholic thinkers in the first half of the 20th century. Simply put, it is in the mainstream of Catholic thinking, and if it seems radical and dangerous to many American Catholics, this only shows how little authentic Catholic social thought is known and embraced among us. Peter Maurin liked to talk about “blowing the dynamite of the Church.” By this he meant making known the Church’s social doctrine, a revolutionary and radical doctrine in the truest sense of the words. I challenge anyone to read carefully Pius XI’s encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* and see if that document does not call for profound changes in the social order and in our way of life. Indeed, the encyclical’s formal title, “On Reconstructing the Social Order and Per-

fecting It Conformably to the Precepts of the Gospel,” is surely a lifetime task for any Catholic.

Both Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin were thoroughly traditional in their spiritual outlook and piety. It is true, however, that even in Dorothy Day’s lifetime some Catholic Workers departed from their founders’ vision and became themselves victims of the liberal/conservative prism. Dorothy Day herself protested against these abuses, and the Zwicks recount the famous story of her dismay, upon returning from a trip, to discover that during her absence a priest had used a coffee cup for a chalice in celebrating Mass. She promptly buried the cup to prevent it from being used again. Also noted is her complaint about the many who receive Holy Communion but the few who go to Confession beforehand. Some, indeed, have criticized her for not doing more to keep her movement more firmly within the orthodoxy from which she herself never deviated. But if this is so, then the Zwicks’ book is all the more important, for by calling attention to

the real spiritual and intellectual roots of the Catholic Worker, to the saints, to traditional and undoubted Catholic thinkers such as Chesterton and Belloc, this book ought to be an aid to the many who look to Dorothy Day as someone who lifted Catholic life above a simple routine of going to Mass while otherwise conforming to the materialism and hedonism that characterize life in the Western world today. Thus, it is not Marx or Mao, but Catherine of Siena and Francis of Assisi, who were Dorothy Day’s mentors.

The Zwicks have written a book that covers a fascinating period of Catholic intellectual history, the last part of the Catholic intellectual revival, a revival that ended tragically and suddenly after the Second Vatican Council. The Catholic Worker can be understood only in the context of the richness of Catholic social thought of the 1930s and 1940s, a context in which traditional piety and “radical” social thought often went hand in hand. But this has always been characteristic of the best of the Catholic tradition, from St. Francis’s

Sound Off!

Praise. Refute. Discuss. Debate. Now you can add your reactions, convictions, and insights to NOR articles, editorials, New Oxford Notes, guest columns, and major book reviews. Log on to our website, www.newoxfordreview.org, to weigh in on the topics you’ve read about in this and every issue of the NOR dating back to 1993. Joining the lively discussion of issues facing the Church today with your fellow NOR readers requires an online subscription; comments can be viewed by all visitors to our website.



decisive rejection of the bourgeois life of his times to Chesterton and Belloc's distributism. In their efforts to apply that social thought to the real world, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin founded a movement that is well worth our continued study. ■

briefly reviewed

The Vatican's Exorcists: Driving Out the Devil in the 21st Century. By Tracy Wilkinson. *Grand Central Publishing*. 208 pages. \$22.95.

It's a telling sign that the movement of Western culture toward secular atheism has been accompanied in recent decades by a skyrocketing interest in one of the Catholic Church's most arcane and, in the eyes of non-believers, backward rituals. Tracy Wilkinson hopes to capitalize on this

surge of interest with her new book, *The Vatican's Exorcists*, by offering an outsider's perspective on the phenomenon of exorcism in present-day Italy. The results are, at best, mixed.

Wilkinson has interviewed a wide array of experts — priests, psychologists, doctors, even victims of demonic possession — including some pretty impressive names, from Fr. Gabriel Amorth, the most prominent exorcist in Rome, to the controversial (and recently excommunicated) Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo of Zambia. She provides a thorough account of the rite's history, tracing it back to Christ in the Gospels, up through the Middle Ages and Fr. Girolamo Menghi's compendium on demonic possession, to the ritual's decline during the Enlightenment, and forward into present times. She notes the growing trend, particularly among Italian women, toward seeking exorcisms, and makes some attempt to account for this through the growth of the Charismatic movement in the Church, which actively (sometimes theatrically) dramatizes

the conflict between good and evil; the papacy of John Paul II, who was an outspoken proponent of exorcism; the high profile of exorcism in popular culture due to films like *The Exorcist* and *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*; and the proliferation of superstition and black magic in Italy. Wilkinson does her best to capture as many different viewpoints on the ritual as she can; she succeeds in showing how broadly attitudes toward exorcism can vary, not only within the Church among orthodox believers, but among medical and psychological professionals as well.

But beyond giving us a lot of interesting facts about exorcism, the book doesn't have much to offer the believing Catholic. For the most part, Wilkinson has her facts straight — although there are some noticeable errors — but her lack of an authentically Catholic perspective makes her readings of certain situations a bit muddled and difficult for the discerning reader to accept at face value. Two particular areas in which she lacks precision is the balance between free will and the influence of supernatural forces, and the nature of religious faith itself.

When reading about matters of faith, particularly something like exorcism, which the Church deliberately de-emphasizes in order to discourage morbid curiosity on behalf of the faithful, a Catholic reader needs a clear set of guideposts to aid his interpretation of the data. This is something that Wilkinson cannot provide. Moreover, even her attempt at objectivity is mired by her failure to comprehend the Catholic perspective. For instance, she treats Church teaching on the existence of demons as though it were a policy that could be discarded by any incoming pope. Such misunderstandings make it difficult for the

NOR DOSSIERS

The NOR is known far and wide for taking bold stands on a broad variety of issues relating to the Church and the culture at large. If you've got sand, we'll draw a line in it! We have compiled over 50 Dossiers of topics covered at length in the NOR: universal salvation, fanatical feminism, the common cup debate, ecumania, wacky theologians, the Lavender Mafia, Just War doctrine, the Legionaries of Christ, "inclusive" language, homeschooling, and much more. Each Dossier culls items from various issues of the NOR under one heading, for easy research and perusal. NOR Dossiers are available online at www.newoxfordreview.org.

