



## Renewing our Love of the Eucharist this Advent

### “Duty of Delight”

**Advent Reflection for Sunday, December 12**

**By Dianne Traflet, J.D., S.T.D.**

Headlines in a Catholic journal this week declared that “Dorothy Day’s cause for canonization enters final phase.” I am delighted. In one of Dorothy’s last letters, she referred to John Ruskin’s “Duty of Delight.” I am embracing that duty whole-heartedly!

Co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement and editor of its newspaper, Dorothy Day (1897-1980) led what often is described as a “radical” life—radical conversion, radical activism, and radical commitment to the poor, marginalized, and hungry. What often is neglected in her story is her rich interior life. Following her conversion to Catholicism, she attended daily Mass, prayed intensely (sometimes for hours) before the Blessed Sacrament, received the Eucharist every day, and encouraged her co-workers to do the same. In 1976, she delivered a presentation to the Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia on the topic “Women and the Eucharist.”

As much as Dorothy worked to give food to the hungry, she knew that “food for the body is not enough. There must be food for the soul. Hence, leaders of the work, as many as we can induce to join us, must go to daily Mass.”

In learning of her life with those suffering from poverty, addictions, and mental and physical illnesses, I cannot fathom how she ever slept. In addition to accompanying these individuals through their afflictions, she, too, often was hungry, and was indeed sleep-deprived as she dealt with lice, mice, and brutally hot New York City summers. How did she do it? My answer: she lived a life of radical love. I know that Dorothy, with so many years of experience as a journalist and editor, would edit my answer, explaining that the key is Love, with a capital L. Understanding that Divine Love helped her to fulfill her calling, she once explained: “Without the sacraments of the Church, primarily the Eucharist...I certainly do not think that I could go on.”

Perhaps this Advent as we consider Dorothy’s Eucharistic spirituality, we, too, may come to rely on the Eucharist to fulfill our vocations to love with the love of God. May God, who is Love, enkindle that desire in our souls, so that we can say with Dorothy Day: “The Mass is our delight, our refreshment, our courage, our light.”

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Dorothy Day, *The Duty of Delight: The Diaries of Dorothy Day* [hereafter *Diaries*]. Edited by Robert Ellsberg (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2008), 498, November 5, 1970.

Ibid.

“The Council and the Mass,” *The Catholic Worker*, September 1962, 2. See Brigid O’Shea Merriman, *Searching for Christ: The Spirituality of Dorothy Day* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 77.