

We Are All Called to Be Saints: Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day and Friendship House*

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Two of the towering figures of modern American Catholicism, Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day, are often linked by scholars and spiritual sojourners alike. One important connection, however, has been overlooked: the Friendship House movement. It championed living out the Gospels through opposition to racial injustice and solidarity with the poor; at the height of its influence in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Harlem Friendship House served as a pioneering center of Catholic lay activism for social justice. Writings by and about the founder, Catherine de Hueck Doherty, make clear Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton's strong links to the movement. Dorothy Day encouraged the founding of the first Friendship House, which thereafter maintained close ties to her Catholic Worker movement. Friendship House is best known, however, through its influence on Thomas Merton's spiritual development, as in his vivid first impression of the founder. 'She had a strong voice, strong convictions, and strong things to say, and she said them in the simplest, most unvarnished, bluntest possible kind of talk, and with such uncompromising directness that it stunned', he wrote in *The Seven Storey Mountain*, adding,

If Catholics, she said, were able to see Harlem as they should see it...as a challenge to their love of Christ...then Communists would be able to do nothing there. But, on the contrary, the Communists were strong. They were bound to be strong. They were...performing some of the works of mercy that Christians should be expected to do.¹

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1. The conference entitled 'The Legacies of Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day:

The movement is also featured in Merton's best-known collection of correspondence and by every one of the biographies, such as *Living with Wisdom: A Life of Thomas Merton*, by Jim Forest. On the other hand, books by and about Dorothy Day, such as Forest's *Love is the Measure: A Biography of Dorothy Day*, make no reference at all to Friendship House or its founder. This omission may be due to the fact that while the movement helped Merton discover his course, with Dorothy Day and Friendship House rather the reverse was true. Thus Merton, by linking up first with Friendship House and subsequently with Dorothy Day and the *Catholic Worker*, was travelling a path first blazed the other way around.²

'The Gospel of Dorothy Day'

In early 1933 Catherine de Hueck was at an impasse. Determined to heed the gospel dictum to sell all and give it to the poor, she had settled in the slums of Toronto, only to face criticism from some of her co-religionists, including her own pastor. 'I wanted', she recalled, 'to serve the poor personally, be poor with them, and witness to Christ before them by a life of Gospel-like simplicity'. (The Baroness—as she was called, having married a baron at age 15—had been galvanized into action when she realized that 'it was the Communists who were...performing the Corporal Works of Mercy'; this zeal scandalized her, because as a member of the aristocracy and a devoted Christian, she had fled for her life from Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution.)³ The local bishop assured her not only that she was

"What Then Must We Do?" (4 April 1998, Rivier College, Nashua, NH) is just one example of the links. Thomas Merton, *The Seven Story Mountain* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1948), pp. 408-409; Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1985), pp. 3-24; Lorene Hanley Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness: The Life of Catherine De Hueck Doherty* (New York: Alba House, 1995), pp. 128, 134, 136, 146, 155, 165, 171, 183, 201-202, 288, 193-94; Catherine de Hueck Doherty, 'Peter Maurin' (pp. 56-58), 'A Son of Israel' (pp. 76-79), 'Man with the Deep-Seeing Eyes' (pp. 92-96), in *Not Without Parables* (Combermere, ON: Madonna House, 1989); Catherine de Hueck Doherty, typed comments on flyleaf of her copy of Dorothy Day's *The Long Loneliness* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), Madonna House Archives, Combermere, ON; Catherine de Hueck Doherty, *Fragments of My Life* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1979), pp. 107-109, 119-20; Catherine de Hueck, *Friendship House* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1946).

2. Jim Forest, *Living With Wisdom: A Life of Thomas Merton* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), pp. 74-77; Jim Forest, *Love is the Measure: A Biography of Dorothy Day* (Boston: Paulist Press, 1986), index.

3. Mary Bazzett, *The Life of Catherine de Hueck Doherty* (Combermere, ON:

ahead of her time, but also that another female lay leader shared her vision of radical devotion to the Works of Mercy: in effect countering those clerics who argued that the laity were not called to preaching, voluntary poverty, and social service. 'Here is a woman who writes the way you think', he said, handing her the inaugural issue of *The Catholic Worker*. 'Why don't you go and see her?' 'Well, I haven't got any money!' 'Oh, I will pay your way'.⁴

For her part, Dorothy Day wrote back to the Friendship House founder, 'You would have a chance to see just what little we are able to do here', but Catherine de Hueck would come away deeply impressed by the experience. She would write of having witnessed in action Christ's dictum to turn the other cheek, calling it 'The Gospel of Dorothy Day', and adding, 'She quoted it...at all times. And what is the most extraordinary thing, she lived it'.⁵

Saint Joseph House, the Catholic Worker House of Hospitality, turned out to be a large apartment crammed with cots. All of them were occupied, so Dorothy Day invited the visitor to share her own bed. Catherine⁶ would frequently recount what happened next: that the two of them were settling down when a dishevelled woman arrived looking for a place to spend the night, that Dorothy offered to

Madonna House Publications, 1998), pp. 20-21; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 39-62.

4. Dorothy Day had sent copies of *The Catholic Worker* to a number of North American bishops. De Hueck, *Friendship House*, pp. 110-11; Elizabeth Sharum, 'Strange Fire Burning: A History of the Friendship House Movement' (PhD dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1977), pp. 55-60; De Hueck Doherty, *Fragments of My Life*, p. 107; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, p. 128; Catherine de Hueck Doherty, 'Reflections of a Contemporary: Catherine Doherty on Dorothy Day', in *Blue Door Stories* (Combermere, ON: 1998); Catherine de Hueck Doherty to Mrs Paul Moore, Jr, 16 November 1967 [1975-0629-47], Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Day, Dorothy, Madonna House Archives.

5. Dorothy Day to Catherine de Hueck, 19 December 1933, Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Day, Dorothy, Madonna House Archives; Catherine de Hueck, *The Gospel of a Poor Woman* (Combermere, ON: Madonna House Publications, 1992), p. 53.

6. Both the Friendship House and Catholic Worker movement eschewed the use of last names. 'People always called him Peter. Sometimes they even called him "Pete"', Dorothy Day once wrote of her co-founder, Peter Maurin. This despite his age, importance, and the general custom in society of referring to males in particular by their last names, as when Thomas Merton wrote, 'After Rice and Gerdy went home, Gibney and Peggy and I sat there'. Dorothy Day, 'On Pilgrimage', *The Catholic Worker* (May 1948), reprinted as DOC #480, Dorothy Day Library: www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/daytext.cfm?TextD=480, hereafter 'Dorothy Day Library on the Web'; Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, p. 303.

share her bed with the newcomer, putting a mattress in the bathtub for Catherine, who warned that the stranger had active syphilis. 'Then I received my first lesson from Dorothy', the Baroness would always recall. 'Usually so mild, gentle, and kind, Dorothy suddenly arose and in a spirited voice said, "Catherine, you have little faith. This is Christ come to us for a place to sleep. He will take care of me. You have to have faith!"'⁷ Actually, the Catholic Worker would later dismiss this story, but would agree with the Baroness's characterization of their first meeting as 'historic', that 'Dorothy Day and I were pioneers...a deep friendship was born which had, in a sense, profound repercussions on the whole lay apostolate of North America'. The next day, as Dorothy showed her the Catholic Worker activities, the two women discovered that they both operated storefront breadlines 'by prayer and begging', as the Baroness later wrote. They decided to have Catherine be, in her words, 'the Canadian agent, if you want to call it that, for *The Catholic Worker*'. A grateful Dorothy Day responded, 'We are so glad to have them distributed... We are anxious to reach the people, and God will take care of the printing bills'. (Later that month the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement sent a donation to cover the cost of the 1,000 copies of *The Catholic Worker* distributed in Toronto.)⁸

She praised the efforts of Catherine and the three other women in the Friendship House community, advising them to ignore the naysayers—at this time even the archbishop was advising the Baroness to go slow—adding, 'women being practical and never too optimistic are the best ones to make these beginnings'. The Catholic Worker leader promised to pray that the 'Houses of Friendship' would be established firmly. 'The main thing is never to get discouraged', she wrote. 'People may be not be articulate, nor active, but even so, we do not know...the effect on souls... We can only go ahead and work with happiness at what God sends us to do'. After all the advice she ended with a request for prayers, and soon Catherine was sprinkling her diary entries with intentions for her New York friend. The Baroness

7. De Hueck, *The Gospel of a Poor Woman*, p. 53.

8. The Baroness had joined the Franciscans as a lay oblate in 1927, and the sisters were 'interested in this work in the archdiocese of Toronto', as they wrote to Dorothy Day, who then informed the Baroness. Dorothy Day to Catherine de Hueck, 19 December and 23 May 1934; Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement to Dorothy Day, 22 May 1934, all in Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Day, Dorothy, Madonna House Archives; Jack English, interview by Deane Mowrer, series W-9, Box 1, p. 12, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University [hereafter DD-CW Collection]; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 98-99, 142.

obeyed the archbishop's dictum that she delay the project for almost a year, in contrast to Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, who had recently begun their work without consulting any church authorities. 'We were just sitting there talking when lines of people began to form, saying, 'We need bread. We could not say, "Go, be thou filled" ', Dorothy Day would recall. 'If there were six small loaves and a few fishes, we had to divide them'.⁹

When Toronto Friendship House finally opened in June 1934, Catholic Worker artist Ade Bethune was one of the first visitors. Impressed with the Baroness's dedication and warm personality, Ade found the cleanliness and order a welcome contrast to the chaos that often reigned in the New York house. At the same time, her artistic temperament chafed at the rigid Friendship House schedule; in the end she felt more at home volunteering at the quasi-anarchic world of the Catholic Worker and living with her parents. Moreover, in one letter Ade characterized Dorothy Day as 'unusual. A chosen soul'. Ade began children's art classes at the new Catholic Worker school in Harlem (near her family's apartment on the Upper West Side.) She kept her Canadian friend apprised of these activities, in the process helping plant the seeds for Harlem Friendship House.¹⁰

That summer Dorothy Day was pleased to learn that one of her speaking engagements would be at the same place that the Baroness was attending a six-week workshop: the Catholic Summer Center in Stamford, New York. 'I was dreading my visit to Stamford—I'm very shy about speaking. Now that you are there I look forward to it', Dorothy wrote. (By vocation a writer, she lacked the experience as a public speaker that her friend had gained from her years as a lecturer on the Chautauqua circuit in the 1920s.) 'I shall count on the extra day there to be with you', the Catholic Worker concluded.¹¹

9. Unlike Thomas Merton's journals, the diaries and journals of both Dorothy Day and Catherine de Hueck Doherty remain closed. The Madonna House archivist, Bonnie Staib, on 18 August 1999 provided the information on the Baroness's diary entries. Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, p. 126; Dorothy Day to Catherine de Hueck, 19 March 1934; 11 April 1934, Catherine Doherty Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Madonna House Archives; Sharum, 'Strange Fire Burning', p. 60; De Hueck Doherty, *Fragments of My Life*, p. 107; Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness*, 'Postscript'.

10. Judith Stoughton, *Proud Donkey of Schaerbeck* (St Cloud, MN: North Star Press), p. 45; Ade Bethune, interview with author, 23 August 1999, Newport, Rhode Island; *Catholic Worker* 2.5 (September 1935), p. 1; Ade Bethune to Catherine de Hueck, n.d. (1936), [1975-0629-13] and 2 August 1936 [1975-0629-14], both in Catherine Doherty Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Madonna House Archives.

11. Dorothy Day to Catherine de Hueck, 23 July 1934, Catherine Doherty Cor-



Dorothy Day and Catherine de Hueck, early 1930s. Published by permission of Madonna House Archives.

respondence, Lay, *Celebrated*, Madonna House Archives; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, p. 134 and Chapter 13, 'The Chautauqua Circuit'. (Duquin writes that they met in Connecticut, probably mistaking the more famous Stamford for the New York one.)

The day together afforded each of them a rare opportunity to confide in another woman of the same age who was trying to live out the gospel message in a radical way, in community, all the while raising a child alone. They must have treasured their moments worshipping together; for them faith mattered most. Their lives revolved around the Mass, the sacraments, the Divine Office, and meditation. Both had become lay oblates of religious orders, and so the Friendship House founder could appreciate better than most the monastic influence on the Catholic Worker movement: its Houses of Hospitality, from the monastic tradition of hospitality; the monastic spiritual writing regularly published in *The Catholic Worker*; the regular donations from monasteries, notably Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky.¹²

Catherine de Hueck, with her European roots, had grown up around monasticism, but it went unmentioned in the secular, vaguely Protestant childhood of Dorothy Day, who learned of abbeys and their religious orders from her French cohort Peter Maurin. Indeed, comparing Dorothy Day to both Peter Maurin and Thomas Merton, Daniel Berrigan, SJ writes, 'unlike them...her grip was on the American idiom and style and mental workings, the continental insularity, both liberating and petrifying, of this country'. Moreover, Dorothy Day's no-nonsense reportorial demeanor, sharpened by her years among New York radicals, contrasted with the effusive Russian baroness, as when Catherine, on spying Dorothy after a long absence, would embrace her in a bear hug and Dorothy would stay ramrod stiff. Contrasting the two, Merton's best friend Bob Lax, who knew both women, has noted that 'Dorothy Day had come from a radical and worker tradition...and the Baroness came from a noble family...and her parents...had been very devout people but also very charitable'.¹³

Upon returning home Dorothy Day sent the Baroness, who was still at Stamford, one hundred copies of *The Catholic Worker* to distribute there. Both women thought that Friendship House also would benefit from a paper of its own. Catherine arrived back in Toronto fired up to begin one, but first she sought permission from Monsignor Francis

12. Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, p. 128; Frederic M. Dunne, OCSO to the editors of *The Catholic Worker* (15 April 1936) W-2.2, Box 1, 'Abbots of Monasteries, 1934-1984', DD-CW Collection. (For subsequent Gethsemani donations see n. 57.)

13. Daniel Berrigan, *Portraits of Those I Love* (New York: Crossroads, 1982), p. 71; Robert Lax, taped responses recorded by him 20 April 1999, Patmos, Greece, answering written questions from the author; Thomas Cornell, interview with author, Peter Maurin farm, Marlboro, New York, 11 August 1998.

Carroll, who became the administrator of the diocese on the death Archbishop Neil McNeil, but the priest decided that such approval must await a ruling by the next archbishop. While discouraged by this setback, the Friendship House staff members found a partial solution via *The Catholic Worker*. As the Baroness later wrote, 'because our Friendship House address was stamped on each paper, *The Catholic Worker* brought us many new friends'. For example, in Hamilton, Ontario, Mary Carroll picked up *The Catholic Worker* at her parish church, liked what she read, wrote to the Toronto address, and soon started a local Friendship House study club at Catherine's suggestion. The latest issues under their arms, Toronto Friendship House staffers would rush out of their headquarters midway through a hectic day of Mass, housework, clothing distribution, assisting immigrants with the Welfare Department, visiting the sick, and leading children's activities. They distributed upwards of 6,000 copies each month, mainly at factory gates but also at Communist rallies. According to the Baroness, at a typical meeting 'Jeers, laughter, and swearing greet us. We think of the rabble that jeered and cursed Christ, and with a Deo Gratias for the privilege of participating in His suffering, and with renewed energy, continue our distribution.' She noted with satisfaction that some of those in the crowd, intrigued by the message of Catholic social action, showed up at her front door a few days later. For her part, Dorothy Day suggested that Catherine send a report of her group's activities to *The Catholic Worker*, writing, 'This will help you get subscriptions for your sheet... When are we going to see it?' As always, she offered her prayers and asked for theirs, signing, 'Love, Dorothy'. In February 1935 she spoke at the Toronto Friendship House, which prompted the rector of St Michael's Cathedral, Father William Muckle, to ask Catherine to open a Catholic Worker house in the parish, with a particular focus on Catholic social issues.¹⁴

As for a Friendship House newsletter, it began to appear as an insert with the Canadian copies of *The Catholic Worker* after the installation of a new bishop in March 1935. By the fall the combined periodical was circulating from the Antigonish cooperative center on the Atlantic coast to Manitoba in the west. The following year the Baroness moved to Ottawa, where she helped establish a Friendship

14. Dorothy Day to Catherine De Hueck, 14 August 1934, Catherine Doherty Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Dorothy Day, 1937-1948, Madonna House Archives; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 128, 133-36; Sharum, 'Strange Fire Burning', pp. 80-81, 85, 92-95; Mary Carroll to Catherine de Hueck, 4 February 1936, and more than ten other letters from various parts of Canada to the Baroness, all in Box 1, RG 2, 4-FH Can., Catholic Worker Paper, Madonna House Archives.

House and, finally, a freestanding newsletter, *The Social Forum*. She received ecclesiastical permission to sell it in Toronto and was delighted that Dorothy Day was willing to share 'her precious Canadian subscription list', as Catherine called it. Dorothy also announced the birth of the Canadian publication—one of 'the children of the Catholic Worker'—in her newspaper column.¹⁵

From the start, the Friendship House periodical featured the 'Easy Essays' of Peter Maurin and the illustrations of Ade Bethune. 'I love your work, Ade, I really do and I think it is your way to sanctification', wrote Catherine, who encouraged the artist to make a drawing of Christ the Worker. For her part Ade turned to her for a type of long-distance spiritual direction, while Catherine valued the young woman's insights and asked permission to publish a letter in which Ade wrote, 'God is not where the noise is...but in the soul'. The young artist also continued to serve as a link between Catherine and Dorothy, for example forwarding the worrisome news that the Baroness's son had contracted pneumonia. Ade's link to the Baroness was in part an emigrant Belgian one; the young artist's upper-class family had come from Belgium, where Catherine's mother and younger brother had stayed after the whole family fled the Bolshevik Revolution.¹⁶

Through Dorothy Day and her newspaper the Baroness also learned about pathbreaking Catholic figures such as Dom Virgil Michel, who stayed for a week at Friendship House. A leader of the liturgical renewal movement, the abbot explained the theological underpinnings of the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours. A grateful Catherine wrote, 'Ever since, those two Hours of the Church's breviary have formed part of our Apostolate.' Friendship House people became associates of Dom Virgil's monastery in Minnesota—in her words, 'apostles of the liturgy'—and she, like Dorothy Day, would often speak there.

The deepening friendship between these female lay leaders reflected

15. John McBennett to 'The Catholic Worker Toronto', August 1935, RG 2, Box 1, 4-FH Canada-Data-Catholic Worker Antigonish movement-coop movement; Catherine de Hueck to [George Sullivan?] n.d., RG 2, J Box 1, 40, FH Can. Data-Social Forum Correspondence, 2 of 2, all Catherine Doherty Correspondence, Madonna House Archives.

16. Ade Bethune to Catherine de Hueck, 26 January 1936, Catherine de Hueck to Ade Bethune, 17 January 1936, 25 February 1936, 8 June 1936, 18 June 1936, 7 August 1936, Ade Bethune to Catherine de Hueck, 11 June 1936 and typescript of same and note by C.D., all in [1975-0629-13], Catherine Doherty Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Madonna House Archives.

and in turn nurtured their respective movements. Not that they always agreed, of course. One time Catherine asked Dorothy if the Catholic Worker house could not be cleaner, more orderly, more systematic in utilizing new volunteers. Even here, however, she noted of the two movements, 'Our work merges into a continuous whole. God bless you!' Dorothy responded, 'You know how much I appreciate your letter of criticisms', adding that she often felt hopeless but reported that more order had been injected recently, along with a coat of fresh wall paint! The Baroness would later recall:

I visited Dorothy every time my lecture tours took me to the United States. She and Peter Maurin often visited Friendship House in Canada. I remember one visit when our whole neighborhood was startled by our Yankee friends arriving in an ambulance with a huge red cross painted on the side. The Worker had been given this ambulance and used it as a cheap means of transportation.¹⁷

Catholic Worker houses were springing up around the United States, while people in various parts of Ontario and Quebec were expressing interest in starting Friendship Houses. When she spoke at the Toronto headquarters in November 1935, however, Dorothy Day learned firsthand about a growing campaign against her friend. People whispered that this outspoken Russian activist must be a Communist, an ironic supposition given that she and her family were refugees from the Bolshevik regime. Criticism of her personal life increased and, to make matters worse, sometimes came from her adolescent son George. She knew he resented the hours she devoted to her work, but only years later would she learn that one of the priests who taught him had been abusing him. George's rebellious thievery reached such proportions that he was brought before juvenile court, and the judge ordered him sent to a boarding school for disciplinary rehabilitation. Naturally, his mother chose a school recommended by someone she knew, a priest who had been transferred there from Toronto, but tragically it turned out that he was her son's abuser. Then her husband, who had been demanding a divorce, stormed in from Quebec, but she continued to refuse because she had applied for annulment, charging physical cruelty and infidelity. He retaliated by hiring a private detective.

To make matters worse, the new archbishop refused to officially approve the Friendship House movement, and this encouraged her

17. Dorothy Day to Catherine de Hueck, 17 October 1934 and 30 May 1936, Madonna House Archives; Catherine de Hueck to Dorothy Day, 18 May 1936, Catherine Doherty Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Madonna House Archives.

critics among the clergy. Even her spiritual director counselled her against what he considered her rashness, dramatic flamboyance as a lecturer, and tendency to speak in hyperbole. Meanwhile disagreements over the operation of the Toronto Catholic Worker house led to an estrangement between her and Father Muckle, who responded by banning all women from the center. (In this regard she was more vulnerable than her friend Dorothy Day, who had co-founded the Catholic Worker movement with a man.) The Friendship House community split apart, as members took sides for and against their leader's stands. She wrote to Ade that she took solace in the artist's drawing of St Francis 'when I am tired of begging and people have been particularly nasty to me'. For her part Ade showed insight beyond her years when she responded:

So now that you have been beaten with rods and deeply humiliated, and thoroughly detached from any big remnant of pride and self-justification, I am expecting big things from your quarters... I love you so much, and ask our Good Father to give us all to see Him, Love Him and rejoice in Him more every day, so we reach the fulfillment of our nature in Him.¹⁸

Dorothy Day also fired off a letter, writing, 'If they are closing Friendship House, it really is a disaster. I'm always expecting that I'll be asked to leave the work for the good of the cause, and I'm more or less prepared for it' because those opposed to the Catholic Worker accused her of being 'an immoral woman, with illegitimate children, a drunkard, a racketeer...with money in several banks, in the pay of Moscow, etc. etc', while some of the Worker volunteers themselves spread rumors that she was in love with one man or another. Although she partly blamed the tales on her own wild past—she was a convert whose earlier life as a bohemian had been punctuated by heavy drinking and sexual affairs, unlike the Baroness but similar to Thomas Merton—Dorothy Day was also of the opinion that, whatever

18. Dorothy Day, *House of Hospitality* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939), p. xxxvii; Catherine de Hueck Doherty, *History of the Apostolate*, excerpt reprinted on a Madonna House flyer, n.d. [1990s], Combermere, ON; Mrs W.J. O'Brien to *The Catholic Worker* [Toronto], 13 August 1935, Catherine de Hueck to Father Cassidy, 25 October and 2 November 1935, Catherine de Hueck to Miss Robinson, 11 November 1935, and Catherine de Hueck to Rev. W.P. Heydon, 20 November 1935, all in RG 2, Box 1, 4-FH Can-Data, Catholic Worker Paper, Madonna House Archives; Sharum, 'Strange Fire Burning', pp. 104-10; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, Ch. 19; Catherine de Hueck to Ade Bethune, 17 January 1936 and Ade Bethune to Catherine de Hueck, both in [1975-0629-13], Catherine Doherty Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Madonna House Archives.

one's past, vicious criticism of good deeds indicated that 'the work must be succeeding beyond your wildest hopes, otherwise the devil would not be putting so many hindrances in the way and trying to break down your morale'. In a kind of verbal embrace she added, 'I wish to goodness I were up there to talk to you...really darling...I have been thinking of you constantly the past week'. She reminded Catherine that she was welcome to come and stay with them, but suspected that their controlled chaos 'would drive you crazy' and suggested that if she needed a change, she stay with the Sisters of the Atonement at Graymoor, north of New York City. Catherine replied, 'It is with your inspiration (personal and through the paper)—yours as well as Peter's—that I have been carried through the darkest days of my foundation'. She asked Dorothy if Peter could write an Easy Essay for her, specifically one to help her understand how people who worshipped the crucified Christ could ignore His suffering as played out in the pain of the little ones of this earth.¹⁹

The Baroness was not allowed to present her side of the story to the archdiocese. In December 1936 the archbishop ordered Friendship House to be closed and suggested that its founder focus instead on anti-communist lectures. Meanwhile, the bishop of Ottawa put that house under the direction of clergy and religious brothers; it closed in 1939. The Friendship House in Hamilton became a Catholic Worker house, interestingly enough, after Mary Carroll convinced her cohorts that it constituted a stronger, more permanent network.

The beleaguered Friendship House founder, for her part, headed to New York. At Grand Central Station Dorothy Day met her 'and indulged in the luxury of a taxi', Catherine recalled, writing, 'I was deeply moved... She and Peter Maurin brought tears to my eyes by singing to me the Church's "Hymn to Confessors"—those who have suffered greatly for the Faith but were not martyred for it'. During her stay Catherine was kept awake by half-drunk residents alternating between 'Sweet Adelaine' and decades of the rosary, and she marvelled at her friend's ability to live with this racket day after day. Of her Catholic Worker friends, Catherine recalled, 'They made my stay so pleasant, in a spiritual and friendly way, that I began to take on a new life'. Dorothy's love and support was 'like a breath of fresh air'. So was a speaking invitation from another proponent of Catholic

19. For the Baroness's evocative profile of Peter Maurin, see 'Peter Maurin', *Not Without Parables*, pp. 56-58. Dorothy Day to Catherine de Hueck, n.d. [June?] 1936, Marquette University Archives; Catherine de Hueck to Dorothy Day, 17 July 1936, Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Madonna House Archives.

social justice teachings, their mutual friend Father Paul Hanley Furfey of Catholic University, who introduced her as 'the Dorothy Day of Canada'. Still at loose ends, the erstwhile Friendship House leader accepted an assignment from *The Sign* magazine to report on Catholic Action activities in Europe.²⁰

In Portugal President Antonio Salazar charmed her. She sometimes was tempted to tolerate the authoritarian methods of such figures because they were practicing Catholics crusading against godless Communists like the ones whose brutality she had fled as a child. As her biographer has noted, 'Like most Catholics of her day, Catherine saw the Spanish Civil War as a holy war between the forces of communism [sic] and Christianity. She read about the desecration of churches, the rape of nuns, the execution of priests, the seizure of land, and the harrowing slaughter of innocent women and children.' This contrasted with Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton. At Columbia University he was engaging in a rare spurt of political activism by demonstrating against Franco and his fascist cohorts, a stance he would uphold for the most part even after his conversion. As for Dorothy Day, she had once been engaged to a Communist, and after her conversion other Catholics scandalized her by practicing the works of mercy less diligently than did many of her old radical cohorts. Moreover, her first autobiography grew out of letters she had written to her beloved younger brother who was a Communist. In another difference, the Catholic Worker movement was pacifist, unlike Friendship House. The two women rarely debated such issues, however, preferring to use their stolen moments of correspondence or reunion pouring out their concerns of the heart and soul. Moreover, Catherine found her crusading mentality tempered by none other than Spanish bishops themselves; she wrote that they considered the Civil War in some measure divine retribution for a Spanish church that had been blind to issues of social justice.²¹

'Wherever I went I was asked to lecture on Dorothy', the Baroness would later recall, writing that in Paris the Catholic intellectuals and activists she met 'knew about Dorothy Day, but nobody knew me'. The Baroness remedied that in short order. 'How is it that you prac-

20. De Hueck Doherty, *Fragments of My Life*, pp. 119-20; Catherine de Hueck, *Our Apostolate*, I (n.p., n.d.), p. 143; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 152, 155-56; Bazzett, *The Life of Catherine de Hueck Doherty*, p. 25; Sharum, 'Strange Fire Burning', pp. 93-96, 111-112.

21. Bazzett, *The Life of Catherine de Hueck Doherty*, p. 25; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 160-161; De Hueck Doherty, *Fragments of My Life*, p. 125; Dorothy Day, *From Union Square to Rome* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939).

tice so well what I preach?' exclaimed the philosopher Jacques Maritain, upon hearing her for the first time (although he had written to her previously of his admiration for Friendship House.) Meanwhile, some four years earlier Maritain had spoken at the Catholic Worker on Dorothy Day's invitation. The St Joseph House residents were then reading his book *Freedom in the Modern World*, and he emphasized the chapter on purification of means. 'He so evidently loved us all', Dorothy Day would recall. Subsequently he published an essay in *The Catholic Worker* warning of the anti-Semitism permeating fascist anti-Communism, and he made clear his opposition to the Spanish Civil War. In 1939 he would speak at both the Catholic Worker and Friendship House, while at another of his lectures that year Thomas Merton would be just a face in the crowd. 'You did not need to talk to him...the impression you got from this gentle, stooping Frenchman with much grey hair was one of tremendous kindness and simplicity and godliness', the young convert noted in his journal, adding that he and his friend Dan Walsh 'were both very stimulated and went off talking about miracles and saints'.²²

Catherine de Hueck was, if anything, even more taken with Maritain's friend Emmanuel Mounier, who wrote and edited a magazine that proclaimed 'personalism'. She noted that Mounier practiced what he preached, humbly listening to the concerns of his many visitors, taxidrivers and professors alike. Coincidentally, at this time a *Social Forum* editor wrote to the Baroness that a New York Catholic Worker meeting 'left me a convinced Personalist. We realize that Capitalism is a present obstacle, and that Fascism or Communism may be obstacles at a later date,...that the Christian life will always be a struggle'. (For his part Thomas Merton would not seriously examine Mounier's philosophy until the 1950s.)

While in Paris Catherine signed up as a day laborer, surreptitiously taking notes on the mistreatment of the workers, until a Communist

22. De Hueck Doherty, *Fragments of My Life*, pp. 129-130; Jacques Maritain to Catherine de Hueck, 26 January 1936, 31 January 1936, 5 February 1936, 4 March 1940, all in Catherine Doherty, *Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Maritain, Madonna House Archives*; Merton, 16 October 1941, *Run to the Mountain: The Story of a Vocation* (ed. Patrick Hart; Journals, I, 1939-1945; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), p. 58; Forest, *Love is the Measure*, p. 99; Day, *The Long Loneliness*, p. 186; Bernard Doering, 'Jacques Maritain's Friendship with Dorothy Day', *New Oxford Review* (December 1985), pp. 16-23, DD-CW Collection; Lax interview; Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*; Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, p. 265; Catherine de Hueck Doherty, inscription in her copy of Raissa Maritain, *Adventures in Grace* (New York: Longmans, 1985), Madonna House Archives.

colleague began propositioning her. She then headed to Belgium, where she visited the Young Christian Workers, who impressed her. In contrast, the leaders of Catholic Action there seemed preoccupied with their relevance to the educated middle classes and with perpetuating their own organization.²³ In Belgium she was reunited with her mother and brothers, then went to England to meet her son George who arrived—in the company of his father's mistress—to enroll in boarding school. He wanted to return to Canada, but his father insisted otherwise. His mother's views are not known, but the teen stayed for the duration, spending his vacations with his uncle's family in Brussels instead of making the long trip home. At this time the child that Thomas Merton had fathered out of wedlock was growing up in England, but nothing more is known, except that the youngster received payments anonymously from the Merton trust fund. Meanwhile Dorothy Day's daughter Tamar, like George, was staying at a boarding school, albeit one nearby. Neither mother wrote in any detail about their child being away to school while they focused on their work, but not infrequently both expressed general concerns about their parenting decisions.

Upon her return, Catherine took up Dorothy Day's suggestion and spent several weeks at Graymoor, site of the Franciscans of Our Lady of the Atonement. The founder, Father Paul Wattson, asked a Harlem pastor to invite her to work in his parish neighborhood. Mulling over the idea, she headed to the New York Catholic Worker, then spent Christmas in Toronto. She returned to New York in January, however, and stayed in a tenement near the St Joseph House of Hospitality.²⁴

After about six weeks she made up her mind to work in Harlem. As she headed uptown, 'the rumble of New York's subway...sounded at times like the noise of an anchor being raised—and I felt myself aboard a sailing vessel going to distant lands to conquer souls for God'. She emerged at 135th Street and rented a tiny apartment: 'mission Blessed Martin de Porres', she called it. Soon Ade Bethune wrote from her own new locale in Newport, Rhode Island, 'you are now living...in Harlem after all!... I am very eager to have a good talk with

23. De Hueck Doherty, *Fragments of My Life*, Ch. 12; George to Catherine de Hueck, 16 March 1937, RG 2, J Box 1, 40, FH Can. Data-Social Forum Correspondence, Madonna House Archives; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 164; Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*, p. 342.

24. Catherine de Hueck Doherty to Mrs Paul Moore, Jr, 16 November 1967; Sharum, 'Strange Fire Burning', pp. 121-122, 124; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 165, 167.

you. Shall be in N.Y. in about 2 weeks', and sent a picture of Blessed Martin that Catherine happily hung in her room.²⁵

On the other hand, she complained to Dorothy Day, 'Since I have moved to N.Y.C. you have been more elusive than when I lived in Toronto.' The Baroness had heard that her friend was ill, had dropped off some freshly laundered bedding and had sent a telegram but it had been returned. 'I hear you are not very well yet', she continued, 'would you like to come and rest here, I have a BATH and some food that trickles in...but mostly my love and professional care... How about it dear soul?' She wrote glowingly about the new Troy Catholic Worker house she had visited while on a speaking engagement there, adding that the local priest agreed that people would 'start measuring your altar'. Meanwhile Catherine happily reported to her friend that in the space of one month she had established: (1) a Catholic Action library with 50 heavily borrowed books, (2) a roundtable discussion group of Harlem Hospital nurses, and (3) a high school club that unanimously voted as its first Catholic Action 'the distribution of the CW'. Dorothy Day attended the official opening of the Friendship House library in May 1938. For her part Ade Bethune contributed illustrations to the *Harlem Friendship House News* beginning with the inaugural issue, and Catholic Workers participated in the opening of Friendship House's permanent headquarters in October. Taking a cue from Dorothy Day, this time the Baroness did not ask for the approval of the local prelate, Francis Cardinal Spellman. Unlike the Catholic Worker leader, however, the Friendship House founder maintained rather close communication with the chancery, as when she complained to Cardinal Spellman about the luxurious rectories of some priests. She remembered him replying:

Catherine, I am a very lucky person. I have you and Dorothy Day praying before the face of the Lord, because your lives are a prayer. I am weak. Ask the Lord that I might always be on your side of the fence. I'll do everything I can...a bishop is not always in complete control of his priests!²⁶

The following summer, when the Baroness returned to Europe on assignment for *The Sign* in order to visit her loved ones, the Catholic

25. Catherine de Hueck, *Friendship House*, p. 40; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 167-169; Ade Bethune to Catherine de Hueck, 3 March 1938, [1975-0629-15], Catherine Doherty Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Madonna House Archives.

26. Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 171, 174; *Harlem Friendship House News*, 1 (4 May 1939), p. 12; De Hueck Doherty, *Fragments of a Life*, p. 152.

Workers invited their Friendship House colleagues to participate in a Day of Recollection. Afterwards the interim Friendship House director wrote to *The Catholic Worker*, 'Short though it was, I felt that a great grace was offered to us and I hope we were all ready to receive it.' In Europe Catherine de Hueck made a point of reporting from Nazi Germany and even managed to witness firsthand the blitzkrieg attack on Warsaw. Soon thereafter she wrote Dorothy Day, 'always in moments of stress I turn to you'. Catherine poured out her feelings, writing, 'And so the abomination of desolation is upon us, for War, just or unjust'—alluding to the women's difference of opinion on this—'always brings it in its wake. My head and heart are filled with what I have seen and heard...I cannot concentrate, somehow my ears are filled with the noise of tramping feet...' She remembered soldiers she had nursed in the Great War, who had told her they fought so that her son would never need risk his life. 'And now George is on his way...all the time amongst the soldiers I see the face of Christ, sad and worn out.'²⁷

Soon after the Baroness's return, Dorothy Day wrote that she had found the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin 'the best thing possible... Bits of it keep running through your mind...I know that it is constantly lifting me out of trouble.' Although leaving soon for a visit to Catholic Worker houses in the Northwest, she assured her cohort, 'We will dash off when I get back and sit down and eat herring and drink tea. Much, Much love, Dorothy.' Sure enough, upon her return they managed to extricate themselves briefly from their endless obligations. The Baroness gave her some reading material and later asked, 'How is the book about Don Marmion's sayings? Hope you liked it.' She went on, 'Thank you for the wonderful time that I had with you. It was really grand! You are a real source of strength to me and always will be. With much love, Catherine de Hueck.'

On another occasion the Friendship House director teased her friend about having stopped smoking, writing, 'that makes me feel lonely in my vice...somehow I have to carry on the tradition or the Lay Apostolate will never be the same!' She added, 'Give me a buzz sometime and let's have lunch!' The main news, however, was grave; all eight Friendship House typewriters had been stolen, and she asked that *The Catholic Worker* publish a request for donations. Sure enough, the next issue featured her appeal. 'We feel all bruised and battered...

27. Ann Harrigan to Dorothy Day, 28 August 1939, Catherine Doherty, Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Day, D., Madonna House Archives and Catherine de Hueck to Dorothy Day, 25 September 1939, DD-CW Collection.

dear CWers...perhaps...your friends...will find us a typewriter, or someone who has one, or even eight. Thank you.' In the meantime Dorothy Day sent up a machine from the Catholic Worker house.²⁸

On the other hand, their differences occasionally surfaced, as when the Baroness wrote, 'I gather up my courage', and requested that *The Catholic Worker* refrain from voicing controversial positions, if only for one issue. 'I want an issue like the ones...before Spain had a Civil War, and before the Second World War started... We miss it all so. We used to wait so eagerly for the next issue of the CW it was such a help'. The Friendship House folks would paste the articles into a scrapbook and reread them on dreary winter nights. The Baroness made it clear that she simply wanted a pause, a respite, assuring her friend, 'Oh, don't think we want you to give up the 'stands' on this or that grave issue of the day. We don't!... But has it to be there every issue for 11 issues?... Everyone has stands and counterstands. The soul is disturbed.'²⁹

'The Man with the Deep-Seeing Eyes'

At this time Thomas Merton was preoccupied with the European conflict and especially with the question of his vocation. In particular he mulled over a challenge that had been posed by Bob Lax while they were walking the streets of Greenwich Village. As they navigated around some subway construction, Lax stopped, turned to him, and asked, 'What do you want to be, anyway?' Stifling an urge to list fame and literary prizes as his goals, Merton replied, 'I don't know; I guess what I want is to be a good Catholic'. Although Lax had not yet himself converted, he was familiar with modern Catholic writers—from Maritain and Mounier to the Baroness to Dorothy Day—and promptly replied:

'What you should say is that you want to be a saint'.

... 'How do you expect me to become a saint?'

'By wanting to', said Lax, simply.

... 'I can't be a saint...'

28. Catherine de Hueck to Dorothy Day, 7 February 1941 and 28 February 1941, both in DD-CW Collection; Catherine de Hueck, letter, *The Catholic Worker* 8.5 (March 1941), p. 7.

29. *Catholic Worker* editors to Catherine de Hueck, 1 December 1939, Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Day, Dorothy, Madonna House Archives; Dorothy Day to Catherine De Hueck, 2 September 1939 and 1 February 1940 and Catherine De Hueck to Dorothy Day, 2 July 1940, 10 November 1940, all in DD-CW Collection.

'No, all that is necessary to be a saint is to want to be one. Don't you believe that God will make you what He created you to be if you will consent to let Him do it? All you have to do is desire it'.³⁰

So Merton thought about this challenge: writing, praying, reading, and walking both the campus and nearby countryside of St Bonaventure College, where he was teaching. Preoccupied with this and exasperated at the students' insularity while war raged in Europe, he ignored most college announcements, such as those for guest speakers. 'I knew there would be one from *The Catholic Worker*', he later wrote, 'and I knew Baroness de Hueck, who was working among the Negroes in Harlem, was also going to come...I had heard something about her and her work in Harlem, because she was well known and admired in Corpus Christi parish, where I had been baptized. Father Ford was always sending her things they needed.' Indeed, the priest—in his capacity as moderator of Newman clubs for the archdiocese—sent over so many student volunteers that the Baroness formed a new interracial study group. By the fall of 1939 some 130 students from both Catholic and non-Catholic colleges were volunteering there.³¹

As Merton noted, students also knew about the Catholic Worker, despite its location at the other end of Manhattan. 'When Father Ford was pastor, the paper, despite the controversial character of its articles, was always kept at the rear of the church', wrote Dorothy Day. Moreover, she and Peter Maurin regularly spoke at Friendship House, and people in both movements attended each other's events. Bob Lax has speculated that he, Merton and their circle had heard of the Catholic Worker 'pretty much from its beginning'.³²

Familiar with both lay movements but preoccupied with the question of a religious vocation, Merton was walking across campus one night in August 1941 when he happened to pass by a lecture in progress. Out of curiosity he peeked inside. 'I realized it was the

30. Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, pp. 285-86.

31. Prominent in the Baroness's datebook—along with the telephone number for the Catholic Worker house—were the day and night numbers for Father Ford, with a cross next to his name only. Catherine de Hueck, pocket telephone book, at 9-4/26, Madonna House Archives; Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, pp. 285-86, 407-409; Gabriel Costello, FSC, *The Arches of the Years* (New York: Manhattan College, 1980), p. 170; 'New York Bulletin', Friendship House USA, Data, Box 2, Harlem: Bulletins and Newsletters, October–November, 1943, Madonna House Archives.

32. Day, *The Long Loneliness*, p. 137; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 169-74; Sharum, 'Strange Fire Burning', p. 127, 140; Lax interview.

Baroness', he later wrote. 'The impression she was making knocked me backwards down the stairs I had just ascended.' This plain-looking woman spoke simply, but even so he could tell that 'Most of the audience was hanging on her words.' She said that Communists would not have a chance 'if Catholics really did the things Christ came on earth to teach them to do: that is, if they really loved one another and saw Christ in one another, and lived as saints, and did something to win justice for the poor'. Intrigued by her challenge, he headed to Friendship House.³³

'One day a young man with a very interesting face came through the Blue Door', the Baroness would write. 'He had a charming smile and eyes that took in everything they saw. They seemed to see very deeply...those eyes could look into the eyes of God even in a storefront in Harlem.' She remembered that he stared out at the slum, wrote a poem, 'and then he put his face upon the window sill and cried, "I have to spend my lifetime to atone for this" and I agreed, because I already was spending my lifetime in atonement'. The young writer visited regularly in August but had to leave to teach, with the resumption of classes that fall, so she did not expect to see him ever again, or at least for a while. She was surprised, then, when he returned on many a weekend for what he termed 'spiritual outings'.³⁴

He regularly took the 'B', as she was known around there, out to eat. The meals were a treat, she wrote—'we had so little exciting food in Harlem'—but she most treasured the chance for uninterrupted conversation with this soulmate and admirer:

He talked about interracial justice and poverty, of God and the things of God, of religious vocations, then back again to poverty, personal poverty, Franciscan poverty... One day I said, 'This is fine and dandy, but I just can't keep going out like this and eating steaks when our staff are eating the eternal soup... Why don't you try out this poverty? I guarantee that you will know much more about the spiritual dimensions by living with us in Harlem than by talking about it over steak, good wine, and cheese for dessert. As far as I'm concerned, I'll be praying for you—but no more discussions away from Harlem for a while.'³⁵

She resembled somewhat the organized, disciplined mother he had lost at a young age, but the B also possessed a warm, engaging side very much like Tom's (as he was known at Friendship House.) Not

33. Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, pp. 407-408.

34. Catherine de Hueck Doherty, 'The Man with the Deep-seeing Eyes', *Not without Parables*, pp. 92-96; Catherine de Hueck, *The Journey Inward* (New York: Alba House, 1984), p. 88; Merton, 21 August 1941 (*Run to the Mountain*, pp. 385-86).

35. Doherty, *Not Without Parables*, pp. 92-93.

quite old enough to be his mother and yet most certainly not his contemporary, the B, who had taken a promise of celibacy, could safely be a close female friend; if there were any undercurrent of attraction between these two charmers, it would be of the safest kind. Both multilingual, they shared an easy familiarity with the continental, especially French, world.



According to the Baroness, a photograph of her taken by Thomas Merton, 1941. Published by permission of Madonna House Archives.

Their continental link had a somber side as well: Tom's only brother and B's only son were both fighting in Europe for the Canadian Armed Forces. Although they did not refer in their letters to this worry that they shared, their friendship must have been a consolation at this time of crisis and danger. 'Bombs are beginning to fall in my own life', he had written the year before, after seeing film footage of the Luftwaffe attacking sites in England that he recognized from his years there. In his novel from this time, then entitled *Journal of My Escape from the Nazis*, the narrator toys with the idea of self-defense through retaliation, thinking: 'the sudden flash of the bomb. And hearing the sound of that air-raid alarm. This, for the first time, made me want to fight'. Most North Americans, including the Baroness would have supported such a stand. Two months before Pearl Harbor she would write in a letter to Merton, 'I could go and fight because by

doing so, I would not be sinning but at least I would offer myself in intention as a victim of expiation for my sins against my brethren'. In the end, however, the novel's protagonist decides that he cannot fight any nation, that nations are phantoms, while killing is all too real. In retrospect, Merton noted, God 'was not demanding that I pass some critical decision defining the innocence and guilt of all those concerned in the war... He was asking me to do, to the best of my knowledge, what I thought Christ would do.' He was coming closer to the pacifism of Dorothy Day. Bob Lax recalls that they were aware of her strong, somewhat lonely stand against all war, and Lax agreed with this. For his part, Merton decided to register with the draft board as a conscientious objector, and most likely did not discuss with the Baroness this difference of opinion any more than Dorothy Day did. On the other hand, at times he seemed almost disgusted at the British and French inability to halt the German advance, and later in life he would write that in the 1940s he had not been a complete pacifist.³⁶

In October 1941, when he thanked the Baroness for 'letting me stand around Friendship House a couple of weeks and evenings', she replied, 'It is we—all of us at FH that really owe you a vote of gratitude for coming to FH. You were of more help than you ever will suspect...³⁷ God bless you dear friend'. When he wondered about the role of writing in his spiritual life, she reassured him, responding, 'The shaft of God's light is striking [sic] you straight in the face...you are blinded by it but soon you will learn to see fully... Tom, oh Tom, you will become so very small that your writing will be like fire...to illuminate our terrific modern darkness'.

He was also wrestling with the meaning of the lay vocations and in particular the role of political activism in Catholic Action, writing to her 'that you yourself illustrate the proper balance: that is...feeding the poor, clothing the needy, then saving souls'. He decided that Catholic Action necessitated supporting certain political movements aimed at redressing society's injustices, but that 'a person who is charitable, and really loves the poor, realizes just how little pure political action, without any charity behind it, really means... When you get

36. Forest, *Living with Wisdom*, pp. 69-72; Gordon C. Zahn, introduction to Thomas Merton, *The Nonviolent Alternative* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1980), p. xviii; Merton, 1 October 1939 and April 1940 (*Run to the Mountain*, pp. 31, 192-193); Catherine de Hueck to Thomas Merton, 25 October 1941, Thomas Merton Center; Thomas Merton, *Turning toward the World: The Pivotal Years* (ed. Victor A. Kramer; Journals, IV, 1960-1963; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), pp. 114-15.

37. This ellipsis was written by Catherine de Hueck herself.

down to it, Catholic Action means...going out and being a saint, not writing editorials in magazines, even, but first of all being a saint'. He wondered about the Catholic Action movement, particularly 'if a Catholic gets into fooling himself that he is leading a crusade, and then turning the country upside down in the name of religion, the way Franco did'. Catherine agreed, characterizing Franco's so-called Catholic Action program as 'a sop to the people to swallow so that the bitter medicine of the political ambition and greed of the leader would not appear so terrific'.³⁸ For her, Catholic Action meant just the opposite. 'CA starts with YOURSELF... When one does work on oneself first...to love God...then God enters into the picture and somehow brings other souls to you, and you become a leader... Out of this comes the right results [sic] in the line of politics etc... Yes, it means a Saint, or trying hard to be one'. She reminded him that 'One thing matters...to show the face of Christ' but for her 'only a handful of people, the FH's and CW's' were devoted wholeheartedly to that goal, through their lecturing, publishing, and above all by 'assuming in a spectacular manner the corporal and spiritual works of mercy...so we make people curious as to why we are in HARLEM or Little Italy'. Lest Merton get discouraged, she assured him that:

there is in you a hidden vitality, that I felt, a hunger under your easy going and smiling exterior... So God alone...allowed you the greatest gift, the lifting of the veil that separates us morally from Him. You have felt it, haven't you each time you meet someone that talks to you about God never mind if it is for or against Him, for he who ever bothers about God one way or another is hearing the baying of the hounds of heaven.³⁹

Perhaps the most poignant portrait of someone haunted by this 'baying' was of the playwright Eugene O'Neill, as described by Dorothy Day when she wrote:

I first heard 'The Hound of Heaven' in an atmosphere of drink and smoke. Gene could recite all of Francis Thompson's poem, and would sit there, black and dour, his head sunk as he intoned, 'And now my heart is as a broken fount, wherein tear drippings stagnate'. The idea of this pursuit by the Hound of Heaven fascinated me. The recurrence of

38. Forest, *Living with Wisdom*, pp. 57-66; Thomas Merton to Catherine de Hueck, 6 October 1941 (*The Hidden Ground of Love*, pp. 3-5); Catherine de Hueck to Thomas Merton, 14 October 1941, Thomas Merton Center.

39. De Hueck Doherty, *Not without Parables*, pp. 92-94; De Hueck, *Journey Inward*, p. 88; Catherine de Hueck to Thomas Merton, 14 October 1941 and 25 October 1941, Thomas Merton Center.

it, the inevitableness of the outcome made me feel that I would have to pause in the mad rush of living and remember my first beginning and my last end.

At daybreak, when she walked past a nearby church she would sometimes enter it, witnessing the first Mass of the day, 'not knowing what was going on at the altar, but warmed and comforted by the lights and the silence'. For his part Merton was not taken with the poem—noting in his journal, 'I sure don't want Francis Thompson in my anthology'—but like Dorothy Day he had drifted into a love for the Mass en route to conversion. 'I found a place that I hoped would be obscure, over on one side, in the back', he wrote. 'What a revelation it was to discover so many ordinary people in a place together, more conscious of God than of one another'.⁴⁰

'How To Be Saints'

The same year that Tom Merton came to Friendship House another, very different kind of writer became intrigued with the place. Eddie Doherty, known as the highest-paid journalist in the nation as a result of his popular articles, had stopped by while writing a piece on Harlem for a national magazine, but even after completing the assignment found himself returning regularly. On one visit he happened upon an intense conversation between the B and Tom. 'I took an instant dislike to him', the reporter later wrote:

He had a full moon shining in each of his big eyes. I didn't like the way he looked at Catherine. I didn't like the way she looked at him.

Then Catherine smiled at me—in a way she had almost never smiled before. It caught me with my guard down. It almost spun me around. I had never, until that moment, seen how supremely beautiful she was! I wished I had stayed blind.

'Pardon me, I forgot to duck', I said, when I caught my wind. Neither understood me, which didn't matter. But, surprisingly, both seemed glad to see me.

'We were talking about how to be saints', Catherine said. The way she said it shocked me—me who had believed himself shock-proof. She was so simple, so direct, so matter-of-fact, so casual! It seemed indecent!... Only sissies talked about being saints. This fellow with Catherine wasn't a sissy, though, whatever else he might be.

40. Day, *The Long Loneliness*, p. 285; Merton, 21 August 1941 (*Run to the Mountain*, p. 386); Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, p. 251.

The reporter, who thought nothing could faze him, suddenly found himself getting queasy. 'Would I have to be a saint to hang around this heaven?' he wondered. Puzzled, he turned to the B's closest associate, Grace Flewwelling, and asked about the young man; Flewy promptly handed him a poem that Tom had dedicated to the Baroness. The second verse caught Eddie's eye:

But in the cells and wards of whiter buildings,
 Where the glass dawn is brighter than the knives of surgeons,
 Paler than alcohol or ether,
 Grayer than guns and shinier than money,
 The white men's wives, like Pilate's,
 Cry in the peril of their frozen dreams:
 Daylight has driven spikes
 Into the flesh of Jesus' hands and feet;
 Four flowers of blood have nailed Him to the walls of Harlem.

'I understood it but I couldn't explain it', Eddie remembered. When Flewy called it 'magnificent', he grudgingly agreed, saying:

'It has a beautiful mosaic of words, but most people won't understand it'.

'You don't like him, do you?' She gave her face a hideous look and blew a series of smoke rings toward me.

'I don't know him', I said.

Once outside, however, the journalist could not help seeing the slum street with new eyes, and he wrote of 'the red and blue and yellow and green kites crucified in the white man's commercial wires...'

At this time Eddie's skepticism was challenged by another Friendship House visitor, Peter Maurin. The Catholic Worker co-founder proposed that he and Eddie become, in Peter's words, 'troubadors of God. We'll just hike, or hitchhike, wherever the Spirit sends us. We'll sing the praises of the Lord wherever we go. We'll write and speak beautiful poems about God and Our Lady. We'll beg when we have to, sleep where we can, and trust in the Lord to take care of all our needs'. These themes were echoed in a book Eddie was reading on Catherine's suggestion, *Abandonment or Surrender to Divine Providence* by J.P. De Caussade, SJ. This particular copy had come from Dorothy Day (who had given it to the Baroness to supplement the original French version that Toronto Friendship House had published.) Eddie returned to his Chicago newspaper world but could not shake off the Friendship House experience. 'It became evident to me, at last, that God wanted me to be a saint!' he wrote in his memoir, 'Oh, he wanted everybody to be saints, too; every soul He had created. But why me—

why me, of all the roughnecks and hoodlums in the world? He wanted me to be a saint? I'd try to please Him'. As for Peter's offer, Eddie decided it was 'Beautiful but mad'. He told Peter, 'I'd love to go with you, but I've purchased a bit of property and...I am going to marry'. Or, as the journalist later wrote, 'I knew I could never be a saint by my own guidance. Only Catherine De Hueck can help me to any sort of sanctity'.⁴¹

Meanwhile the Friendship House director was on a lecture tour, and when folks from Saint Bonaventure picked her up in Buffalo to bring her back to the campus, Tom Merton came along. As he expected, in the car she turned to him and asked when he would join Friendship House for good. Afterwards, he wrote to her, 'you have done me an inestimably great honor, far above my own worthlessness, in asking me to come to FH, even before I got around to asking it myself'. He had been astonished, however, when his vague answer in the car had made her think that he was considering the priesthood; he presumed that he had effectively masked his mingled feelings of desire and fear of rejection. In the letter he elaborated, writing that he 'very nearly entered the Franciscans...and now am convinced that the Order is not for me'. He had come to believe that:

since with God all things are possible, with his help I can someday be a Saint... In all this I depend on a miracle...I am not only not a Saint but just a weak, proud, self-centered little guy, interested in writing, who wants to belong to God, and who, incidentally, was once in a scandal that can be called public, since it involved lawyers. So that's the dirt. Never forget me in your prayers!⁴²

Perhaps Catherine sensed Tom's dilemma because she was wrestling with her own vocation crisis. When she had stopped to lecture in Chicago Eddie Doherty had proposed marriage and she had rejected the offer, running away in tears. For one thing, her request for an annulment from Baron de Hueck was still in limbo. For another, Friendship House staff members remained celibate. This was not a vow; a person could marry and continue to volunteer at Friendship House, but anyone who married would no longer be a member of the

41. Eddie Doherty, *A Cricket in My Heart* (San Antonio: Blue House Press, 1990), pp. 60-61, 98-99; Catherine de Hueck Doherty, inscription on the inside cover of J.P. De Caussade, SJ, *Abandonment to Divine Providence* (trans. Ella McMahon; New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1887), Madonna House archives; J.P. De Caussade, *Abandonment* (Toronto: Friendship House, n.d.); Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, p. 194.

42. Thomas Merton to Catherine De Hueck, 10 November 1941 (*Hidden Ground of Love*, pp. 7-9).

permanent staff. At the same time, she continued to be consumed with love for Eddie. She hid her anguish from nearly everyone but did confide in her spiritual advisor, Father Furfey, who was, in her words, 'filled with Dorothy's brand of Christianity'. The priest supported her decision to remain single, writing that, although Eddie would totally support Friendship House and its mission, marriage 'of course... would hurt the work. You couldn't give yourself to him and the work both, with the same emotional intensity. But it must have been very hard', Furfey concluded. 'Ed is such a beautiful character'.⁴³

Twelve days earlier Father Furfey had conducted a Day of Recollection at Friendship House. 'Everything he said that day made a strong impression on both me and Lax', Tom Merton noted in his journal. To the B he wrote that the retreat—'all about Harlem'—had been 'terrific... I came back here all on fire with it... And what happened? I started thinking about the Trappists again'. As much as Merton benefited from Friendship House's Day of Recollection, the typical Catholic Worker retreat of that era might have inspired him even more. It stressed the same characteristics that appealed to him about monastic life—adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, prayer, silence, and asceticism—in order 'to teach us the ABC's of learning to be holy', as Dorothy Day would explain in a 1946 article entitled 'Called To Be Saints'.⁴⁴

Back at the college he prayed to Saint Thérèse at her shrine in the campus grove, 'I can't go on like this... Show me the way'. In fact until the month before he had dismissed the saint as someone for the sentimentally pious, but once he actually sat down and read her autobiography, he was moved to write:

Everything in her story knocks me flat... Everything about her and her father illustrates Kierkegaard's remarkable intuition that the greatest and most perfect saints are those whose saintliness *cannot* be contained except beneath some exterior that appears totally mediocre and normal... I cannot rest since I have read this book. I am terrified and excited

43. Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, p. 195; Sharum, 'Strange Fire Burning', pp. 232-33.

44. Day, *The Long Loneliness*, 'Retreat'; Thomas Merton to Catherine De Hueck, 6 December 1941 (*The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 10); Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, p. 435; Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*, pp. 196-98; Merton, 24 November 1941 (*Run to the Mountain*, pp. 452-53); Dorothy Day, 'Called To Be Saints', *The Catholic Worker* (January 1946), Dorothy Day Library on the Web, DOC # 418.

at the thought that a soul so great should suffer so much on earth, and after her death remain on earth with us... This is the saint that is given for our terrible, ugly, cruel, maniac, blasphemous, murdering age.

For her part Dorothy Day had also dismissed the saint, calling her 'a young nun with a sweet insipid face' and later explained that in her post-conversion fervor 'I much preferred then to read about spectacular saints who were impossible to imitate'. That the Little Flower was championed by the likes of Father Charles Coughlin probably did not help matters; the radio priest's writings increasingly had an anti-Semitic undercurrent, and he had built in her honor a showy basilica, the largest in the nation. By the mid-1940s, however, the Catholic Worker leader was lauding, in her words, '*the little way* which the great modern Saint Thérèse has pointed out', and in the following decade would write a full-length biography, *Thérèse*, to give solace to the many people who felt 'hopeless and useless, less than the dust, ineffectual, wasted, powerless'.⁴⁵

Catherine de Hueck, on the other hand, had always loved the Little Flower. The Friendship House leader possessed none of the urbane skepticism that still clung to Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton years after they had foresworn New York's bohemian culture. (As for the Coughlin factor, it happened that Eddie, interested in writing a piece on him, read Saint Thérèse's life, and although the reporter was not a church-goer, the saint's story prompted him to pray to her for help in landing an interview. The radio priest had a policy of never talking to reporters, but agreed to see Eddie Doherty on condition that the journalist promise to attend Mass every Sunday.) Catherine, in her letters to Tom, explained that she loved the saint 'for the greatness of her Little Way. We strive for big things, and she at 20 knew that neither 'big' nor little' mattered only God's will. She is abandonment personified and for the last 15 years I have struggled to conquer myself and learn that hard and simple virtue'.⁴⁶

Shortly after deciding to apply to Gethsemani Abbey, the young teacher examined his decision one last time and found that the factors in favor of this choice were, if anything, even clearer than he initially

45. Merton, 8 October 1941 (*Run to the Mountain*, pp. 432-34); Mike Aquilina, 'One Hundred Years Down the Little Way', *Our Sunday Visitor* (September 28, 1997), p. 6; Day, *The Long Loneliness*, p. 123; Dorothy Day, 'The Servile State', *The Catholic Worker* (July-August 1945), pp. 1, 3, Dorothy Day Library on the Web, DOC# 412.

46. Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, p. 191; Mary Bazzett, *The Life of Eddie Doherty* (Combermere, ON: Madonna House Publications, 1998), p. 13; Catherine de Hueck to Thomas Merton, 25 October 1941, Thomas Merton Center.

thought. For one thing, he realized that to be the only male staff member among five or six or so females at Friendship House would be 'intolerable. To someone else it might not be. To me, it is...if I am with women, I know they are women, every minute... When I am away from women, I do not think about them, however, and can be at peace to pray. My prayers would be very confused in Harlem'. In a similar vein, he considered the recreational activities 'no less fruitless and unsatisfactory than saying hello to all the sophomores on this campus, as I do every day. Both occupations could...be used...as a means to sainthood: but not by me'. He concluded that 'The Baroness is a saint. Harlem is full of saints. And in Harlem there is no doubt even a possibility of martyrdom...but is it the best possible way for *me* to serve God perfectly?... When I think of the Trappists—it is all different. I cannot think of one thing that would not help me towards God, with His grace!'⁴⁷

Although she confessed to disappointment at her young friend's decision, the Baroness quickly added, 'and yet how could I be if the retreat of Father Furfey brought to your mind the Trappists'. In fact, at this time the priest was introducing her to contemplative prayer. Also, monastic saints and prayers had long infused Friendship House spirituality, so it is not surprising that she added, 'How wonderful, how perfect! A Trappist and a priest! High is your calling, dear friend, and wonderful to behold the Face of God in silence'. (On a more mundane note, she wrote, 'P.S. How about that car. Are we getting it, or not. If we are, I do wish it would come because it is so important just now'.)⁴⁸

On 5 December 1941 Merton wrote in his journal, 'No letter has come—not from Gethsemani, not from the draft board... But when I pray, there is no fear, for the Lord shelters me... Saint Theresa, Little Flower, never cease praying for me! JMJT' Anticipating either the army or the abbey, he began giving away his belongings, including most of his clothes to Friendship House and a book manuscript to the Baroness in place of the car that he had promised her. On 10 December 1941, as the nation mobilized for war in the wake of Pearl Harbor, he headed the other direction. Just three days after his arrival at the monastery he wrote to the Baroness, 'It will no doubt be hard, but at least I know there is nothing keeping me from God any more... I will

47. Merton, 25 November and 30 November 1941 (*Run to the Mountain*, pp. 456, 464-65).

48. Catherine de Hueck to Thomas Merton, 13 December 1941, Thomas Merton Center.

never forget FH in my prayers! And pray for me! And write, sometime! Merry Christmas.⁴⁹

For Dorothy Day, meanwhile, Pearl Harbor was nearly cataclysmic. When *The Catholic Worker* made clear its opposition to US involvement in the war, subscriptions plummeted. Fifteen Catholic Worker houses closed—including the one in Hamilton, Ontario, that had originally been a Friendship House—as volunteers left for the army or alternative service. The New York archdiocese ordered Dorothy Day not to advocate avoidance of the draft and she complied, commenting that perhaps it was better after all if people followed their own consciences. On the other hand, in response to irate letters asking what she would do if someone attacked her daughter, she stood firm. Acknowledging that it might sound naive to some readers, she nonetheless wrote that she would ‘Restrain him of course, but not kill him. Confine him, if necessary. But perfect love casts out fear and love overcomes hatred... Our rule of life is the works of mercy.’ She carried on, serving the poor, lecturing, and visiting other Catholic Worker houses. Among other stops, she spoke at the new branch of Friendship House in Seattle and reported on it to her readers.⁵⁰

At this time Catherine de Hueck shared her concerns about George’s safety not with the friend who also had a loved one fighting for Canada, but rather with the one who professed staunch pacificism. For one thing, Trappist mail was strictly limited. Moreover, the Friendship House director had never confided her own problems to the young volunteer. In contrast, ties of age, motherhood, longtime friendship, and a common vocation between the two women outweighed their basic disagreements over the war, at least in Catherine’s mind. ‘Georg [sic] is leaving for Russia on the 15th of March’, she wrote to Dorothy, adding, ‘Say a prayer for him. He is going as a Liason [sic] for the British Army’. The Friendship House leader also suggested that the two women meet for lunch, noting that ‘It is a long time since I have written to you or seen you. But daily, in fact, several times a day I have talked to the Lord about you in my own funny

49. The manuscript Merton donated to Friendship House would eventually be published as *The Secular Journal*. Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, p. 213; Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*, pp. 201, 202, 678; Merton, 5 December 1941 (*Run to the Mountain*, p. 471); Thomas Merton to Catherine de Hueck, 13 December 1941 (*The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 12).

50. Forest, *Love is the Measure*, pp. 102-104; Rosalie Troester, *Voices from the Catholic Worker* (Pittsburgh: Temple University Press, 1993), pp. 15-18, 505; Sharum, ‘Strange Fire Burning’, pp. 94-96; Dorothy Day, ‘Day after Day’, *The Catholic Worker* 9.8 (June 1942), p. 6.

way, and I have found you...in His heart too, and I know that you have been praying for me.⁵¹

Immediately after Merton's departure the Baroness could take solace in the fact that his best friend Bob Lax had joined her staff. He would serve as a subsidiary link between her and their mutual friend (just as Ade Bethune had acted as an additional connection to Dorothy Day when Catherine herself was living up in Canada.) The Friendship House regimen soon exhausted Lax, however, and he left after a year or so. Nonetheless he remained close to her, as when he reported in 1943, 'I'm visiting Merton who looks fine. People here asked for you'. From a teaching post at the University of North Carolina he declaimed:

Just got the F-H News. Some issue...
 Seen Merton at Christmas.
 He still likes it there.
 Talked to him and we laughed so much
 We both almost got thrown out.

Writing to her about his own baptism in 1944, Lax added that he had made a retreat at Gethsemani. He concluded with a note of thanks 'for your prayers and example', and said that he would be coming by the Harlem house soon.⁵²

By this time, however, the Friendship House director had herself left New York, in her case because of the turmoil in her personal life. Early in 1942 a persistent Eddie Doherty finagled to have her meet Bishop Bernard Sheil of Chicago in hopes that the prelate would encourage them to marry. Instead the bishop urged her to establish a Chicago Friendship House. (He was known as a supporter of social activism; the December 1941 issue of *The Catholic Worker* featured his letter upholding the right of workers to organize.) He even offered to pay salaries to any Harlem Friendship House people who would relocate. When Father Furfey heard about this, he cited the example of Dorothy Day and advised that Friendship House workers remain

51. Catherine de Hueck to Dorothy Day, 10 February 1942, DD-CW Collection.

52. Lax would remain close to the Friendship House founder to the end of her life, as when he wrote from Greece in 1967 about her hermitage, 'Dearly Beloved Catherine, I've been thinking about Poustinia/keep trying to find one here/... landscape is almost as good as Combermere for meditation' (ellipsis and verse form by Lax).

Robert Lax to Catherine de Hueck Doherty: 13 December 1943; n.d. [Chapel Hill, N.C.]; 1 February 1944; n.d.; 12 July 1967, all five in Lax, Bob, Catherine de Hueck Doherty, Correspondence, Lay, Celebrated, Madonna House archives; Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*, p. 202.

dedicated to voluntary poverty in solidarity with society's outcasts, instead of taking salaries. He also warned against binding the Friendship House movement closely to any bishop. In the end the Chicago Friendship House was established, however, along with the Sheil School of Social Studies. Former Catholic Workers, ignited by Catherine's call for racial justice, were among the founders of both establishments. More often, however, her speeches drew not volunteers but rather vitriol and threats, even from fellow Catholics, while her plea for Catholic universities to open their doors to African Americans was met with excuses. Nearing despair, the Baroness turned for solace to her old soulmate Dorothy Day, writing, 'Pray, oh pray that the human element in the Church does not fail my Negroes!'⁵³

In May 1943 church officials approved Catherine de Hueck's annulment. Eddie Doherty promptly knelt down and proposed to her in front of the bishop, promising to adhere totally to her way of life. Catherine responded to him once again by crying, but this time she did not run away; they were married by the bishop on June 25 in a private ceremony. Apprehensive, the Friendship House director had told none of the staff people, fearing their disapproval. Sure enough, Flewy described her reaction as 'calm because I was numb like when you get cut it doesn't hurt for a few minutes', while Father Furfey considered the Baroness no longer the head of the movement. He and the top staff met with her for five emotional hours. They all argued, listened, wept. She offered to resign but in the end they decided to allow her to continue as director.⁵⁴

Dissatisfaction continued to fester, however, and as World War II was drawing to a close the couple retreated to the one place that reminded Catherine of Russia: Combermere, Ontario. They bought a cottage and established a center to serve the rural poor and to train volunteers in the lay apostolate. (She also wrote the book *Friendship House*.) By 1947 the rift in the movement would become a complete break.⁵⁵

53. Dorothy Day, *The Catholic Worker* (December 1941), DOC #377, Dorothy Day Library on the Web; Catherine de Hueck to Thomas Merton, 13 December 1941, Thomas Merton Center; *Harlem Friendship House News* 1.9 (January 1942), p. 1; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 199-202, 204; Catherine de Hueck to Dorothy Day, 10 February 1942, DD-CW Collection; Sharum, 'Strange Fire Burning', p. 146.

54. Bazzett, *The Life of Catherine de Hueck Doherty*, pp. 30-32; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 206-209.

55. Sharum, 'Strange Fire Burning', pp. 124-25; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 213-15, 227-38; De Hueck Doherty, *Friendship House*.

Despite her preoccupations and his cloistered life, the Friendship House founder and the new monk remained soulmates. His poems regularly appeared in the *Harlem Friendship House News*, while one of her last contributions there was entitled 'The Lay Apostolate and the Contemplative Life'. To another friend Merton wrote that 'only here and at Friendship House in Harlem have I found people who really wanted to be saints, and knew they could be, too, because God will make anyone live for Him who wants to, and when you live for love alone, you become filled with love, and that is to be a saint'. Soon after its publication in 1946 *Friendship House* was read aloud to the monks of Gethsemani. 'Everybody liked it a lot. Tell her if you write to her', Merton wrote to Lax.⁵⁶

Working on the book had prompted the author to recall her walks with Dorothy Day in the slums of New York. 'At times it seems to me that the road we [trod] was just your soul', the Baroness recalled. Regretting that they had not shared such moments in a long time—and perhaps concerned because her old friend had not commented on Eddie and the marriage—Catherine added:

friendship like ours, methinks, [is] a great and holy gift of God... And though you and I know that we are very close in prayer and meet daily at His Table...nevertheless... He used speech...visited His friends [;] why shouldn't we from time to time... So how about it DD [;] would you once in a while write a letter or two to your old friend the 'B'...with whom in [a] manner of speaking you shared the first days of the Lay Apostolate in America (and Canada and points east and west?)⁵⁷

Nevertheless in the future they would exchange fewer than one letter per year. On the other hand, the work of the two movements regularly intersected until the demise of Harlem Friendship House in the 1950s. Occasionally Friendship House people contributed to *Catholic Worker*—particularly reviews of books on the 'Negro Question'—and they invited Catholic Workers to their retreats. After one such Day of Recollection a *Catholic Worker* editor wrote, 'Father Furfey possesses a complete understanding of Friendship House and...of our

56. Thomas Merton, 'Holy Communion', *Harlem Friendship House News* 1.9 (January 1942), p. 2; Thomas Merton, 'Aubade—Harlem (For Baroness C. de Hueck)', *Harlem Friendship House News* 6.11 (April 1947), p. 5; Catherine de Hueck, 'The Lay Apostolate and the Contemplative Life' [reprint?], *Harlem Friendship House News*, 6.4 (September 1946), p. 1; Thomas Merton, 11 November 1942 and 1 April 1948, (*The Road to Joy*, pp. 15, 167, 170).

57. Catherine de Hueck Doherty to Dorothy Day, 26 November 1945, 18 June 1946 and Dorothy Day to Catherine de Hueck Doherty, 19 March 1946, all in DD-CW Collection.

own Houses of Hospitality'. Moreover, one of the staunchest Catholic Workers, Stanley Vishnewski, wrote a regular column for the *Friendship House News*, much to Dorothy Day's chagrin. As Catholic Workers left to attend some Friendship House event she would sometimes snap, 'You're not going to join them, are you?'⁵⁸

She knew better. After all, she herself was referring to Friendship House in the past tense as early as 1948. The center of gravity was shifting to the Catholic Worker. For example, after 1948 Thomas Merton's works would appear not in *The Friendship House News* but, rather, in *The Catholic Worker*. It is likely, then, that he read Dorothy Day's columns, as when she wrote, 'After the last war, everyone was talking about the lost generation. After this war, thank God, they are talking more about saints.' She cited W. H. Auden, who wrote, 'The saint does not ask to become one, he is called...and assents to the call. The outward sign...is the suffering which is suddenly intruded into his life': the same message the Baroness gave to Merton just a few years earlier. At this time Merton himself wrote, 'The saints are glad to be saints, not because their sanctity makes them admirable to others but because the gift of sainthood makes it possible for them to admire everybody else' for his book *Seeds of Contemplation*. *The Catholic Worker* published an excerpt from the book *Seeds of Contemplation* upon its publication. Merton likely had the Friendship House and the Catholic Worker movements in mind when he wrote in that book, 'The surest asceticism is the bitter insecurity and labor and nonentity of the really poor...why do so few become poor out of love, in order both to find God in poverty and give Him to other men?'⁵⁹

58. Finding aid, Catherine de Hueck Doherty-Dorothy Day correspondence, Madonna House Archives; James Guinan, interview by author, Madonna House, Combermere, ON, 20 August 1999; *Harlem Friendship House News* 4.7 (December 1944), p. 2; 6.6 (November 1946), p. 5; 6.11 (April 1947), p. 3; 7.1 (June 1947), p. 8; 7.2 (July-August 1947), p. 8; 7.8 (February 1948), p. 2; 7.9 (April 1948), p. 2; 7.10 (May 1948), p. 8; 'New York Bulletin' (17 December 1945), p. 3 and 'Saint Ephrem the Syrian' (1946), p. 2, also six schedules of public programs, December-January 1944, February 1945, February 1947, summer 1947, February 1948, March 1948, and n.d. [late 1940s], all in Friendship House USA Data, Box 2, Bulletins and Newsletters, Madonna House archives; Forest, *Love is the Measure*, pp. 186, 191-92; *The Catholic Worker* 10.8 (July-August 1943); 11.2 (February 1944); 11.3 (March 1944); 11.4 (April 1944); Cornell interview.

59. The Gethsemani abbot, Dom Frederic Dunne, undoubtedly approved without reservation the publication of his monk's work in *The Catholic Worker*; he donated to the Catholic Worker more consistently than abbots from any other monasteries, and he ordered Dorothy Day's book *From Union Square to Rome* soon after

Despite the problems at the Harlem house, in the following years Friendship Houses would be established in Washington, DC (1949), Portland, Oregon (1951), and Shreveport, Louisiana (1954), spearheading a number of actions during the heyday of the civil rights movement. Moreover, a member of the Chicago Friendship House, Ed Chambers, would go on to succeed Saul Alinsky as head of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the most successful grassroots community-organizing movement in the United States and one of the few hopeful developments on the current political scene, according to analysts such as William Greider, who added, 'The modern IAF, unlike Alinsky, espouses a political doctrine that is rooted in the language of the Gospel'.⁶⁰ Ed Chambers would count Dorothy Day as one of his mentors, but otherwise she and Thomas Merton would have virtually no contact with these Friendship Houses, which is not surprising; none were affiliated with the Baroness's Combermere group and, more importantly, all of the houses except the Chicago one would fade from the scene.⁶¹

At the same time Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day would increasingly correspond with each other and with mutual friends such as Daniel Berrigan, while her newspaper would serve as one of his main publishing outlets. All of this would have important consequences for modern spiritual sojourners in general and the US Catholic peace

its publication in 1939, writing, 'I am sure that we shall all enjoy reading it'. Even during the controversial World War II period he sent contributions, writing to her, 'No doubt, in these trying times, your work multiplies'. Frederic M. Dunne, OCSO to Dorothy Day: 4 January 1939; 3 February 1939; 5 September 1939; 11 August 1941; 23 June 1942; 3 July 1945; 16 December 1946, all in W-2.2, Box 1, 'Abbots of Monasteries, 1934-1984', DD-CW Collection; Cornell interview; Dorothy Day, 'On Pilgrimage', *The Catholic Worker* (May 1948), DOC #480, Dorothy Day Library; Lax interview; Catholic Pacifists' Association, *Blessed are the Peacemakers* (Canada, n.d., but before World War II), cover and pp. 26-29, Thomas Merton Center; Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1949), pp. 43, 166-167; Donald Grayston, *Thomas Merton: The Development of a Spiritual Theologian* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 1985), p. 431.

60. Sharum, 'Strange Fire Burning', pp. 124-25; Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness*, pp. 213-15, 227-38; Michael Tomasky, *Saul Survivors* (New York: V.V. Publishing Co., 1995); 'Ed Chambers', advance.depaul.edu/news/commence98.html#Chambers; William Greider, *Who Will Tell the People: The Betrayal of American Democracy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), p. 225.

61. The Combermere center, Madonna House, eventually established its own field houses, with 23 in 8 countries by the 1990s. Madonna House, *Madonna House Lay Apostolate* (Combermere, ON: Madonna House Apostolate, 1997), p. 1.

movement in particular.⁶² For her part, Catherine deHueck Doherty—up northern Canada and not of a clear pacifist bent—would remain on the periphery of these debates. At a deeper level, however, both Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton would treasure her friendship to the ends of their lives, remaining united with her in prayer, love, and shared memory of the days when Friendship House served as a beacon of hope in Harlem.

62. Bradford T. Stull, 'Wild Seeds: Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day' and Marilyn Sunderman, RSM, 'Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day on Prayer, Conscience and Christian Social Responsibility: A Comparative Study', both in *The Merton Annual* 12, (1999), pp. 164-67, 168-88; Julie Leininger Pycior, 'A Comparative Biography of Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton: Overview of a Work in Progress', *Centenary Tribute to Dorothy Day* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, forthcoming.)