Dorothy Day and the Beginning of St. Joseph House of Hospitality in Pittsburgh 1936-1941

by Paul Dvorchak

Dorothy Day (1897-1980) is perhaps the most well-known American Roman Catholic of the twentieth century. As the cause for her canonization by the Catholic Church has been opened, she can now be referred to as a "Servant of God." A historian described Day as "the most significant, interesting, and influential person in the history of American Catholicism." Catholic Worker Tom Cornell observed: Dorothy's enduring significance is that she was revolutionary, and that's so easily obscured or white-washed in a canonization process.

Dorothy Day was a radical, and you shouldn't lose sight of that. She was a radical and the Gospel in its prophetic voices - like those of Jeremiah and Isaiah - was the source of her radicalism. Her life's story is well known - a bohemian who once worked for a socialist newspaper, she had an abortion and lived in a common law marriage. She later bore a child, converted to Catholicism and co-founded the Catholic Worker movement and newspaper with the French Catholic anarchist, Peter Maurin. Catholics from different ideological points of view claim Dorothy Day as their own - such as progressives, conservatives, pacifists, anarchists, and union activists. All argue for her membership in their community, which also points to her unique position in the oftentimes fractious history of the Catholic Church in America. Among the many aspects of her life, Dorothy Day is most well known for her co-founding the Catholic Worker movement and newspaper in 1935. One mission of the Catholic Worker was the founding of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, a home for homeless men in New York City.

Within three years of the start of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality in New York City, an organization in Pittsburgh called the Catholic Radical Alliance (CRA) began its own House of Hospitality of the same name as that in New York. But even before the beginning of the Pittsburgh house, Dorothy Day visited Pittsburgh since the Catholic Worker movement has always been more than just an organization that provided shelter and food for the poor. There is and has always been a strong social activist and social justice element to the movement. In the mid-1930's, the rights of workers was the issue that was predominant in many American minds, especially Catholics.

The Communist Party of the United States posed a real threat to the Church in America as the great majority of Catholics, especially in the industrial Northeast, belonged to the working class. During the Great Depression, 32% of Pittsburgh's workers were unemployed; this figure rose to 56% in Pittsburgh's Hill District. Sixty of 200 organizers of Pittsburgh's Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) were Communists. So, initially, Dorothy Day visited Pittsburgh to find out for herself about the different issues facing Catholic workers who were employed in the region's coal mines and steel mills. After the establishment of Pittsburgh's House of Hospitality, Day visited Pittsburgh as part of her peripatetic visitations of all Catholic Worker houses and groups in the United States. After her encounter with the retreats conducted by Rev. John Hugo, Day visited Pittsburgh as part of her on-going spiritual journey as well as her interest in the social problems of the day — whether they were labor-related, issues of war and peace, or the Church's role in serving the poor. The focus of this article is the establishment of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality in Pittsburgh and Day's influence in its founding and development.

Dorothy Day first came to Pittsburgh to visit Fr. James Cox in January 1936. She visited Cox at Good Samaritan Chapel, observing:

In Pittsburgh I had time to go to mass at Father Cox's Chapel of the Good Samaritan (old St. Patrick's had burnt down last March.) His district is shut in by freight yards and train tracks, storehouses and commission houses. It is one of those desolate city slum neighborhoods, but Father Cox's heart is there in the work for his people and he loves it. 5

Dorothy Day in late 1930s or 1940s.

Courtesy: Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University Archives, Milwaukee, WI.

4 James Renshaw Cox (1886-1951) was a Pittsburgh diocesan, activist priest and a mentor of Fr. Charles Owen Rice. During the Great Depression, he organized a food-relief program and helped the homeless and unemployed. He is best known for leading 25,000 unemployed — dubbed Cox's Army — on a protest march to Washington, D. C. in January 1932. The march sparked formation of the Jobless Party, and Cox became its presidential candidate in 1932.


Dorothy Day's writings (721 articles from the Catholic Worker newspaper and her four books) are available at the Dorothy Day Collection website: http://dorothyday.catholicworker.org. All websites cited in this article were accessed June-July 2014.
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Dorothy Day next visited Pittsburgh in Summer 1936 and likewise recorded her visit in her column in the Catholic Worker newspaper. She first visited and had supper with Pittsburgh's Bishop Hugh C. Boyle. The next day she visited working areas with Mary Heaton Vorse who wrote for the Socialist paper, The Masses, and was familiar with the labor situation in Pittsburgh and knew priests who were supporters of workers’ rights. In William Miller’s biography of Day, he relates the story about a young Catholic student who read the Worker and drove Day and Vorse to the small towns during the visitation. He greatly intrigued Miss Vorse as he began to talk to and question Dorothy Day about spiritual matters and told them of his practice of rolling in a briar patch for penance. This anecdote points to something not usually commented on—that sixteen years after women won the right to vote, a Catholic lay woman was viewed as a leader and role model of a lay-run, social movement in the Catholic Church.

Dorothy Day’s visit to Pittsburgh in Summer 1936 was quite varied. She visited with Catholic union leaders such as John Brophy, Philip Murray, and Pat Fagan—all involved in organizing steelworkers and coal miners. She also met with Father Adalbert Kaczyński,7 who spoke from a wooden platform in an open air meeting at St. Michael’s Church in Braddock. Day quoted Father Murray, and Father Kaczyński agreed with the role model of a lay-run, social movement in the Catholic Church.

Dorothy Day’s visit to Pittsburgh in Summer 1936 was quite varied. She visited with Catholic union leaders such as John Brophy, Philip Murray, and Pat Fagan—all involved in organizing steelworkers and coal miners. She also met with Father Adalbert Kaczyński,7 who spoke from a wooden platform in an open air meeting at St. Michael’s Church in Braddock. Day quoted Father Kaczyński:

Remember you have an immortal soul, he told them. Remember your dignity as men. Do not let the Carnegie Steel Company crush you. For the sake of your wives and children and your homes, you need the union.... I favor a yearly wage.... I favor security for the workers so that they will not live in fear.8

Father Charles Owen Rice
Among the Pittsburghers who looked to Dorothy Day as role model and the Catholic Worker for inspiration was Fr. Charles Owen Rice (1908-2005), an assistant pastor at St. Agnes Church in the Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh. Fr. Rice had started a discussion group for students who graduated from St. Agnes grade school, but who were going to public high school.9 Rice called it the Junior Newman Club, which met weekly. Rice introduced the members of the club to Catholic magazines such as Commonweal and America and the Catholic Worker newspaper as well as the social encyclicals of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI. They met on Stanwix Street in Downtown Pittsburgh, which was the headquarters of a Catholic women’s group. In a 1935 letter to Dorothy Day, Rice enclosed one dollar and asked her to send twenty copies of the last Worker. He told Day of his student club, stating that: "I want to wake them up. Some stirrings of life are noticeable already."10

One of the young parishioners of St. Agnes who belonged to Rice’s club was Alan Kistler, who later became the Director of Services for the AFL-CIO.11 Kistler would play an important role in the development of Pittsburgh’s house of hospitality.

Followers of the famed radio-priest Fr. Charles Coughlin12 also

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7 Adalbert Kaczyński (1871-1947) — known as "the working man’s Moses" — was a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh and served as pastor of St. Michael (Slovak) Parish in Braddock for 51 years. He championed the workers and provided his church as a meeting place during the Great Steel Strike of 1919.
9 Interview of the author with Alan and Marie Kistler (July 30, 1991) at the Kistler home in Silver Spring, MD. Audiotape, digital copy and transcription located in St. Joseph House of Hospitality Archives, 1835 Bedford Avenue, Pittsburgh PA (hereinafter cited as SJHHA). Msgr. Charles Owen Rice agreed with the Kistlers on the beginning of the Catholic Radical Alliance in a letter commenting on the interview dated January 23, 1993, also in SJHHA.
11 The role of Alan Kistler (1921-2008) in the labor movement was best summarized in the May 13, 2008 statement issued by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney on the death of Kistler. Alan first joined the union movement as a 17-year-old volunteer picketer in several strikes in his hometown of Pittsburgh. He had already held union cards as a hotel elevator operator, copy boy, cub reporter, and steel mill laborer shoveling molten steel when he was recruited by the legendary Steelworkers president Phil Murray to the organizing staff of the old CIO in 1952. Four years later, Alan joined the staff of the recently merged AFL-CIO in its Organization Department. He would later serve as its Director of Organization and then Organization and Field Services from 1973 to 1986. He was so widely trusted throughout the union movement that after he retired in 1986, he was asked to serve as an umpire mediating jurisdictional disputes between unions. For many years, he also served the movement he loved as president of the Human Resources Development Institute, where he led the AFL-CIO’s job training efforts. The statement appears at http://www.aflcio.org/Press-Room/Press-Release/Statement-by-AFL-CIO-President-John-Sweeney-on-Dea.
12 Charles Edward Coughlin (1891-1979) was a popular radio priest based near Detroit in Royal Oak, Michigan, who preached social justice and initially supported Roosevelt and the New Deal. He later opposed Roosevelt and became increasingly anti-Semitic. Under pressure from the U.S. Attorney General Francis Biddle, Coughlin’s superior, Archbishop Edward Mooney, silenced Coughlin’s political and public activities. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Coughlin.
attended Rice’s meetings on Stanwix Street and Kistler said that at the beginning they too were involved in social justice, but the Coughlinites became anti-Semitic and were opposed to President Roosevelt. The meetings became turbulent. Fr. Rice and co-worker Fr. Carl Hensler said that these meetings could not continue in that manner and suggested that the meeting group split in two, depending on who wanted to follow Coughlin or the Pittsburgh priests. This was the beginning of the Catholic Radical Alliance.13

The Catholic Radical Alliance
Father (later Monsignor) Rice — along with Father (later Monsignor) Carl Hensler14 and Msgr. George Barry O’Toole15 — co-founded the Catholic Radical Alliance in 1937. The Alliance (or CRA) supported the unionization of workers at the H.J. Heinz Company and the Loose Wiles Biscuit Company in Pittsburgh. In addition to its union activities, the CRA would also establish St. Joseph House of Hospitality.16

The Catholic Radical Alliance was officially announced in The Pittsburgh Catholic in two installments on June 3 and June 10, 1937. Both editions featured the organization at the top of the front page in a bold subtitle “Catholic Radical Alliance” with no byline.17 The initial article began by explaining that the organization planned to start a Catholic Worker group in Pittsburgh inasmuch as the city was at the heart of manufacturing and mining. It gave a short history of how Day and Maurin began the Catholic Worker in New York:

The ideal behind the “Catholic Worker” might best be termed simply living Christianity. They started out with the intention of bringing Catholic teaching to the workers and the poor; with the idea of bringing charity of Christ to all; with the idea not merely of patching up a Godless, tottering society but of reconstructing it on Catholic principles. They wanted to start building a Christian social order..... It was a tremendous, ambitious program. Only either madmen or good Catholics could have conceived it.18

An adjoining column appeared in even larger bolder letters — “To Support Heinz Strikers.” The article reported that the Catholic Radical Alliance would support the Canning & Pickle Workers Union, A. F. of L., in its demand to be recognized as the bargaining agent for Heinz employees. Beginning that very morning, members of the Alliance would join the picket line outside the Heinz plant on the North Side. Two points should be noted: (1) from the very beginning, the Catholic Radical Alliance saw the issue of labor justice and solidarity as one of its primary functions, and (2) The Pittsburgh Catholic, the official organ of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, gave the Alliance and its activities prominence.

The very next week’s edition of The Pittsburgh Catholic again gave the Catholic Radical Alliance prominent space on the front page: a column reported that a two-week strike at the Heinz Company ended with the workers being given the right to choose the Canning & Pickle Workers Union, Local No. 325 of the A. F. of L. The column reported that the CRA actively supported this union.19 But not all Catholics agreed with the CRA.

An adjoining article, titled “Father Cosmas Files Objections,” was written by Rev. Cosmas Minster, O.S.B., who was an assistant at St. Mary’s Parish on Pittsburgh’s North Side. Fr. Cosmas defended the Heinz family for its favorable treatment of employees. He accused one of the strike leaders of having a Communist background. He also objected to the tactics of the CRA and said that clergy leading the CRA should have had the courtesy to contact local clergy who had the same training and read the same papal encyclicals. Fr. Cosmas then mentioned that Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical, “The Condition of Labor,” called for cooperation between owners and workers, not antagonism which the CRA supported.20 The CRA column continued on the same page as that of Fr. Minster. This column reported that Fr. Hensler answered a criticism similar to that of Fr. Minster — that a union wasn’t really needed because the Heinz family always treated their employees fairly. Hensler said that even if that were true, a union should be chosen because “the workers were not children to be bossed and babied, but grown men and women with freedom and responsibility.”21 This interesting exchange points to the spirit of the times, and the active involvement of clergy in the social and economic lives of Catholics. It also speaks of the openness and willingness of the diocesan newspaper to give space to both sides of the arguments of the day. The Pittsburgh Catholic prominently featured the Catholic Radical Alliance for the most part on the front page from July 1937 through September 1938, sometimes moving the column to an inside page

13 Interview of the author with Alan and Marie Kistler (July 30 1991), SJHHA.
14 Carl Peter Hensler (1898-1984) was a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Educated in Rome, he was a pupil of minimum wage proponent, Msgr. John A. Ryan. He served in China, helping to establish the Catholic University of Peking. Returning to Pittsburgh, he was a founding member of the Catholic Radical Alliance.
15 George Barry O’Toole (1886-1944) was a native of Toledo, who received doctorates in philosophy and theology from the Urban University in Rome. He served as a U.S. Army chaplain in World War I. He taught at both St. Vincent College in Latrobe and Seton Hill College in Greensburg, and served as chairman of the Philosophy Department at Duquesne University. He was the first rector of the Catholic University of Peking in China. After his return to the United States in 1934, O’Toole became a founding member of the Catholic Radical Alliance. He was the sole cleric to testify before a Senate hearing in 1940 in opposition to the pending military conscription act.
16 As to the Catholic Radical Alliance, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Radical_Alliance.
17 “Catholic Radical Alliance,” The Pittsburgh Catholic (June 3, 1937), 1; “Catholic Radical Alliance,” The Pittsburgh Catholic (June 10, 1937), 1. See K.K. McNally, Sr., Is It? The Witness of Monsignor Charles Owen Rice (Pittsburgh: D.A.R.T. Corp., 1989). In the latter work, Rice stated that he began to write for The Pittsburgh Catholic on the doings of the CRA and that both he and Alan Kistler wrote all the CRA columns. Id., 135, 143.
18 “Catholic Radical Alliance,” The Pittsburgh Catholic (June 3, 1937), 1.
19 “Catholic Radical Alliance,” The Pittsburgh Catholic (June 10, 1937), 1.
20 “Father Cosmas Files Objections,” The Pittsburgh Catholic (June 10, 1937), 1, 16.
21 "Catholic Radical Alliance," The Pittsburgh Catholic (June 10, 1937), 16.
or later to the last page. After St. Joseph House of Hospitality was established, a column under the name of "St. Joseph's House of Hospitality" began on December 7, 1939 on page twelve alongside a Catholic Radical Alliance column. The Catholic Radical Alliance column never had a byline, but the St. Joseph column did and the latter's authors rotated among Alan Kistler, Charles Barrett, and Lawrence Sullivan.

Opening of St. Joseph House of Hospitality
Inspired by Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker, Pittsburgh's Catholic Radical Alliance opened St. Joseph's House of Hospitality at 901 Wylie Avenue on July 20, 1937.


The policy of the House was established on the basis of the prototype in New York, that is to say, to furnish food, shelter and clothing free of charge without questioning, keeping of statistics or case-records, in short, without red-tape of any sort.... The House in Pittsburgh opened on July 20, 1937 in a vacant butcher shop on Wylie Avenue, located in the slums of the town. From the beginning we served to the limit of our capacity, some 200 meals per day and floor space at night for as many men as could be accommodated in the two rooms, while hundreds had to be turned away every day for lack of facilities.21

Rev. James Garvey, a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh who served as director of St. Joseph House of Hospitality from January 1985 to July 1992, commemorated St. Joseph's 50th anniversary by writing a short history of St. Joseph's based on an interview conducted with Msgr. Charles Owen Rice in June 1986. Concerning the opening of St. Joseph House of Hospitality, Rice said that Fr. Thomas Lappan, director of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, found an empty butcher shop at 901 Wylie Avenue in Pittsburgh's Hill District to serve as the initial location of the House of Hospitality. The St. Vincent de Paul Society paid the monthly rent of $20. The Wylie Avenue building was small but not tiny. CRA meetings held at Wylie Avenue had room for about 50 people.22

Dorothy Day visited Pittsburgh shortly after Pittsburgh's House of Hospitality opened. The August 19, 1937 edition of The Pittsburgh Catholic Worker reported that Day was in Pittsburgh for two days on her way from New York to Cleveland. She talked to the Catholic Radical Alliance and gave ideas on establishing a House of Hospitality. Members of the Pittsburgh Alliance visited the Catholic Worker in New York. The next issue of The Pittsburgh Catholic provided more detail on Day's visit. Local members of the Alliance wanted a member from the New York Catholic Worker to come to Pittsburgh to help organize the House of Hospitality. Day discouraged that idea, saying that locals should run the Pittsburgh House. Her advice was to start small, even if only in a store front.23 The same article mentioned a more detailed visit of those from Pittsburgh to the New York House on Mott Street and a farming commune in Easton, Pennsylvania.

The same edition of The Pittsburgh Catholic had an adjoining column titled "Dorothy Day's Talk On Communism." Day spoke to the Alliance on August 18 and discussed the differences between Communism and Christianity:

In a very true sense Communism may be regarded as a perverted kind of Christianity; a heresy.... We, on the other hand are very prone to neglect the communal aspect of our religion. We deny the Mystical Body of Christ in many ways. How many of us look upon the Negro as our brother in Christ?24

She ended the talk speaking about the importance of ideas and the importance of spreading ideas. "Revolutions begin in the printing press."25 As to this last idea, members of the Catholic Radical Alliance took Day's teaching to heart as all subsequent editions of The Pittsburgh Catholic, for at least the next year and a half, had articles written by a member of the Catholic Radical Alliance.

Both the didactic and anarchic spirit of Dorothy Day exists in another document that resides at Pittsburgh's St. Joseph House of Hospitality's archives. This document appears to be the Catholic Radical Alliance's mission statement. It is typewritten with no author or date. It can roughly be dated as of the time of the founding of the first House of Hospitality since the address on the original document is 901 Wylie Avenue, which is crossed out and "61 Tannehill(sic) St." is penciled in. The 61 Tannehill Street is the second address of St. Joseph's. A quote from the document gives a flavor of those involved in the beginning of the Catholic Radical Alliance:

"The Catholic RADICAL Alliance is a group of priests and lay people who have got together for the purpose of doing something about the present social and economic mess. We are radical, not that we are Reds, but that we want to make radical, honest-to-goodness changes in the above mentioned mess. The change we want is really more radical than the change the Communists want... We have a right to call ourselves radical.... For one thing we believe in every man having and being protected in ownership, and control of his means of making a living.... As change in the social and economic setup can't come unless there be a change in the hearts and morals of men... As the basis of our program we have the Encyclicals (Letters to the Church) of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI... We have no formal membership, no constitution, and as little organization as possible, since many a good movement has been stifled by over-organization."26

22 “Brief History of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, Pittsburgh, Pa.” (typewritten on St. Joseph's letterhead with the address 61 Tannehill Street, Pittsburgh 19, PA), SJHHA. This history was written after the move from Wylie Avenue to Tannehill Street.

23 James W. Garvey, 50th Anniversary St. Joseph's House of Hospitality 1937-1987 (Pittsburgh, 1987), SJHHA. The Rice interview tape and Garvey transcription are located in SJHHA.

24 "Catholic Radical Alliance," The Pittsburgh Catholic (August 19, 1937), 1

25 "Catholic Radical Alliance," The Pittsburgh Catholic (August 26, 1937), 1, 16.

26 “Dorothy Day's Talk on Communism," The Pittsburgh Catholic (August 28, 1937), 1, 16.

27 Id., 16.

28 "THE CATHOLIC RADICAL ALLIANCE" (a one-page typewritten, unsigned document), SJHHA.
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There were differences between the New York and Pittsburgh Catholic Worker organizations, and that is as it should be according to the loose organization intended by the founders. Alan Kistler said that the New York Catholic Worker became strongly pacificist while the Pittsburgh group tended more toward labor issues. For instance, Fr. Rice started labor schools. These started before World War II and initially the schools were for priests. Bishop Boyle encouraged diocesan priests to attend. The schools taught labor history and tactics and the Church’s teachings about those issues. Rice had a series of instructors who taught at the schools, all active in issues concerned with workers and workers’ rights such as Amy Ballinger, Joe Gony, Fr. Higgins, and Leo Brown. Alan’s wife, Marie Kistler, stated that Alan was “the expert” on the encyclicals. Kistler mentioned that labor schools had access to published literature from the National Catholic Welfare Council (NCWC). The NCWC published pamphlets on unions, guilds, cooperatives, women at work and the family, plus the papal encyclicals and study guides.29

Just as the New York Catholic Worker started a farming commune in Easton, Pennsylvania, the Catholic Radical Alliance began its own farming commune on 100 acres in Slickville, close to Delmont in Westmoreland County. In its weekly column in The Pittsburgh Catholic, the CRA asked for volunteers and donations to support the farm.30 In the same issue of the diocesan newspaper, it was reported that Dorothy Day visited St. Joseph’s House of Hospitality on Wylie Avenue and was encouraged by the progress there. She also spoke at the Catholic Forum at 212 Stanwix Street.31

The Move to a Larger Facility

The large number of unemployed and homeless men in Pittsburgh forced St. Joseph House of Hospitality to move to a larger facility. But the move was not without controversy. The Pittsburgh Catholic of March 31, 1938 carried an article titled “House of Hospitality Moves to Tannehill St. But Not to Stay There.” The author stated that St. Joseph House of Hospitality moved its meager belongings to the former St. Rita’s Home, but they did not intend to stay there as the place is too large, and if the group were to stay in it, and expand, the result would be institutionalization. The “Catholic Worker” ideal, which is the one followed by the C.R.A., calls not for a centralized, large House of Hospitality but for a number of smaller ones. In a big building the personal touch is lost.32

Thus was the announcement made that St. Joseph House of Hospitality moved from the butcher shop on Wylie Avenue to Tannehill Street in the Hill District. The building at 61 Tannehill Street was long and narrow with 52 large rooms, ten bathrooms, 2 kitchens and a chapel.

Here we served from 800 to 1000 meals per day and accommodated from 600 to 700 men at night. There were beds available for about 350 men on the basis of first come, first served, the overflow slept as best as they could on the floor in the Halls and on the stair-cases.33 St. Joseph House of Hospitality remained at this address for thirty-six years — until 1974, at which time, it moved to its present location at 1635 Bedford Avenue.

On May 25, 1938, almost two months after the move to Tannehill Street, Dorothy Day paid a surprise visit to Pittsburgh, leaving the next day. At first she didn’t like the large size for fear of institutionalization but she changed her mind and said she would ask other bishops to turn over vacant property to serve the poor.34

Day reported her visit in the Catholic Worker newspaper thusly:

In Pittsburgh a tremendous building has been turned over to the Catholic Radical Alliance and so far only one end of one floor has been cleaned up for use. The Akron group, mostly rubber workers, drove me to Pittsburgh and when we arrived in town there was no food in the house, just the soup stewing on the stove in huge milk cans for the next day. We sent out for baked beans and bologna and sliced up onions to top off the meal. Bill Lenz, who lives there and together with Steve McCarthy is in charge of the work, are sixty and seventy years old respectively, and to see these men sitting down with the youths from Akron warmed the heart. The groups are made up of young and old, worker and scholar, Negro and white, men and women. Truly a lay apostolate.35

Dorothy Day was back in Pittsburgh on July 2 and recorded the visit in her journal:

Got in last night by bus…. The halls of St. Joseph’s house smell of cats. They have cleaned up one wing and about thirty men are being housed and fed three meals a day, and about 500 their lunch of stew. A man donates $100 worth of meat a month which is a godsend and they get vegetables from the produce market. Someone gave a truck. They are all drinking sassafras tea since one of the merchants at the market gave them a big basket of the root bark for brewing. I had some for supper last night and it was good…. And I wished the princes of the church were living voluntarily down in a place like this where the food is scarce and often bad. Today for instance for breakfast was coffee so weak that the skim milk, slightly soured, took from it any color it had. The oatmeal was tasteless, but the toast, dry was good. For lunch a very greasy lamb stew, plain lettuce, and boiled parsnips. No one ate any parsnips but the stew was cleaned up. It was a good stew. But there is nothing in the house for the coming week to make soup out of. The cellar is full of baskets of radishes, parsnips, and woody turnips, slimy lettuce, and spinach. The place is full of flies as a result of the decaying vegetables and the cellar is half flooded with water which makes it worse…. Tomorrow the soup line will get a concoction of turnips and parsnips and lamb

29 Interview of the author with Alan and Marie Kistler (July 30, 1991), SJHHA.
30 “Catholic Radical Alliance,” The Pittsburgh Catholic (February 24, 1938), 1, 16.
31 “Dorothy Day Pays Visit to Alliance,” The Pittsburgh Catholic (February 24, 1938), 16.
34 “Brief History of St. Joseph’s House of Hospitality, Pittsburgh, Pa.,” SJHHA.
35 “Catholic Radical Alliance,” The Pittsburgh Catholic (June 2, 1938), 1.
36 Dorothy Day, Catholic Worker (June 1938), 1, 2.
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fat. God knows what kind of a concoction that will be, but not very appetizing. I shall concentrate on the food problem and drag in the lay apostolate on that basis. It is an insult to St. Joseph, our provider, to serve such meals.... Fr. Rice was just in -- he has been ill and is still weak, but feeling better after his retreat. The trouble is the lay people have left the work to him, thinking three priests are at the head of this Alliance. It should be the work of the laity. Most of the money comes from young curates who can ill afford to help. I'm going over to John Brody [national director of the CIO]'s for supper now, the afternoon having already passed.37

It is hard to overstate the importance that Dorothy Day attributed to Pittsburgh's Catholic Radical Alliance. In the June 23, 1938 edition of The Pittsburgh Catholic, the Catholic Radical Alliance column announced that Dorothy Day would be coming to Pittsburgh the first two weeks of July for a vacation with her daughter.38

Dorothy Day was something of a celebrity to Pittsburgh Catholics — at least to those who edited and wrote for the local diocesan newspaper. But she also was popular with local parishies. Her July 1938 visit was billed as a vacation for her, but she had many speaking engagements as well. She spent her time during this Pittsburgh visit speaking to study clubs on the Catholic Social Movement. She spoke to the St. Vincent DePaul Society at St. Mary of Mercy Church (Downtown), the Pittsburgh Council of Catholic Women at 5216 Penn Avenue, the study club called the Sheep and Goats at Sacred Heart in Shadyside, and the local branch of the Catholic Daughters of America. She spoke at St. Lawrence O'Toole Parish on Penn Avenue and at St. William Parish in East Pittsburgh. She also spoke to both the Catholic Forum and Holy Innocents Parish in Sheraden.39 The following week's edition of the newspaper recapped Day's two-week visit to Pittsburgh and mentioned that she also spoke to about 400 people at Duquesne University and to a similar group at Seton Hill College in Greensburg. She then left Pittsburgh for Philadelphia.40

Dorothy Day did not visit Pittsburgh again until March 1939 but there was contact between Pittsburgh and the Catholic Worker of New York between June 1938 and March 1939. Father Rice wrote to Bill Callahan, managing editor of the Catholic Worker newspaper, mentioning that he would be debating a Communist by the name of Browder and that he would be happy to have a group come from New York. Rice asked in the letter about Dorothy and answered a query from Howard Ford, who asked if Rice was still with her.41 Rice responded that he would be with Day "until the sands of the desert grow cold and hell freezes over."42 Instead of Browder, Rice debated Clarence Hathaway, editor of the Daily Worker on October 10, 1938. Rice answered in the negative as to the question, "Can a Catholic accept the outstretched hand of Communism?"43

On January 23, 1939, Rice wrote to Dorothy Day. The letter read almost as a confession or as one admitting failure to a mentor:

"Somehow or other your Pittsburgh branch does not satisfy me, it does not jell. I earnestly believe it is my fault. At times I am quite convinced that it would go far, far better without me. I am lazy, I don't indoctrinate (sic) enough, I often don't (sic) keep close tab enough.... With great misgivings I put George Langer in charge. He said he is efficient and a strong character, but I kept hoping that I could change him and through him really get a Catholic Worker started. He was efficient and did rather well. The spirit however was cracking. He was better than Lenz. However in spite of all I could do we were degenerating in the direction of a very efficient "Catholic" flop house.... There is something wrong with the movement here as it has operated under my direction. Where is the nucleus of zealous young spirits willing and eager to live in voluntary poverty, where are the vibrantly alive study groups? I run a very efficient flop-house, I feed the men well, they respect me and, God help us, think me a very holy and worthy man. I get my name and picture in the papers, I talk on the radio. We hold meetings, we have all manner of meetings and committees, but we are not Catholic Workers.44

The letter's last paragraph asked Dorothy Day to send or lend a young man from New York, "who has the true spirit."45 Now that the CRA and St. Joseph's House of Hospitality were operating out of the larger Tannehill Street building, it was easy to see how difficult it must have been to maintain the idealism that existed at the smaller Wylie Avenue address. Besides, maintaining the loose Christian anarchism of the Catholic Worker — where everyone's opinion was as valid and as valuable as the next person's — would be difficult to maintain in even a small organization or facility.

Dorothy Day next visited Pittsburgh on March 23, 1939 — long enough to address the regular meeting of the CRA. She remarked how much the place had improved since her last visit. Her talk was a review of Catholic Worker principles but she emphasized the movement "because the idea of revolution, even a Catholic and bloodless one" needed that. She said that the New York Catholic Worker often had to trust in Providence when things looked bad. They were usually in debt but something always turned up. Her visit was reported in the "Catholic Radical Alliance" column of The Pittsburgh Catholic.46 In the same paper, under the heading "Liturgical Movement," the author stated:

A neglected phase of the Catholic Social movement will be emphasized at tonight's meeting. A paper on the liturgy in general

38 "Catholic Radical Alliance," The Pittsburgh Catholic (June 23, 1938), 16.
39 "Catholic Radical Alliance," The Pittsburgh Catholic (July 7, 1938), 1, 16.
40 "Visit Completed By Dorothy Day," The Pittsburgh Catholic (July 14, 1938), 1, 16.
41 "Visit Completed By Dorothy Day," The Pittsburgh Catholic (July 14, 1938), 1, 16.
42 Letter of Charles Owen Rice to Dorothy Day (September 16, 1938), DD-CWC.
43 Letter of Charles Owen Rice to Dorothy Day (January 23, 1939), DD-CWC.
44 Id.
45 "Catholic Radical Alliance," The Pittsburgh Catholic (March 30, 1939), 1, 16.
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will be read, to acquaint the people with the prayers and functions of the Church which are characteristic of the universal worship in the Mass and the Office. Other meetings will treat of more specific liturgical matters, and will tie up the ideas of the liturgy with the movement of social justice.46 This meeting was a preview for the colloquium to be held at St. Joseph's in early April 1939.

From April 10 to 12, 1939, members of the Catholic Worker Movement from across North America held a "Colloquium on Social Catholicism" at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality in Pittsburgh. Interestingly, Dorothy Day was not mentioned as attending. Representatives from different Catholic Worker houses from the United States and Canada came to Pittsburgh to discuss the following topics: Liturgy, Catholic Sociology, Voluntary Poverty, Anti-Semitism, Peace, Agrarianism, and Labor. Those who did attend were active in both the Liturgical Movement and the Catholic Social Movement such as Rev. Paul Hanley Furfury, Rev. Bede Michel, O.S.B., Rev. John T. Reid, Rev. George Vogt, Rev. Gregory Blonde, Dr. Mary Elizabeth Walsh, and clergy from the Pittsburgh Catholic Radical Alliance. Mass was held in the chapel of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality on both Tuesday and Wednesday and both of these liturgies were "Dialog Masses." Compline was sung each afternoon.47

Liturgical Development

The connection between the liturgical movement and Catholic social activism, which culminated with the Second Vatican Council, is surprising in that not only were these issues being discussed in the late 1930's but that clergy were actually celebrating innovative liturgies. There was a conscious connection between those dedicated to living out the radical Gospel and the study and reform of the Roman Catholic liturgy. This issue — the relationship between the Catholic experience of liturgy and Catholic concern for social problems and solutions — needs further study and research.

A later Catholic Radical Alliance column in The Pittsburgh Catholic, under the simple subtitle "Liturgy," related that a discussion took place at a CRA meeting on August 3, 1939 at which a critical study of the Canon of the Roman Mass was undertaken. One part of the discussion was on the placement and the efficiency of the Epiklesis in the Canon. These discussions show that the young men and women who volunteered and staffed St. Joseph's had more on their mind than just feeding and housing the poor.48

Some who participated in the April 1939 Colloquium must have criticized the Tannehill residence as too large. Stephen McCarthy, in an undated letter on plain letterhead, answered the criticism. At the top of the letter is the inscription "For Publication" and as the letter is located in the Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection of Marquette University's Archives, it must have been sent to New York for publication in the New York Catholic Worker. Most of McCarthy's response to the criticism was made in religious terms — such as who can question doing God's Will? McCarthy said that the Pittsburgh house served 800 men daily and sheltered 300 every night. Classes were offered every Saturday for about 70 African-American children. The House of Hospitality sold 3000 copies of the Catholic Worker every month along with other publications, periodicals and pamphlets. Every week the House gathered two large truck loads of "unmarketable vegetables at the large produce yards and commission houses in the district. Everything is free to their guests, there are no charges."49

Dissension

Then there was dissension within St. Joseph's House of Hospitality itself. An unsigned April 15, 1939 letter (on St. Joseph's letterhead from Tannehill Street) — written just three days after the Colloquium — addressed to "Bill" states:

Seems a young revolution has started here among the younger cw-minded people.... There are certain evils and injustices that are unavoidable in a place so big.... The works of mercy are pushed away by keys, stewards, rules, time limit, etc. The zeal of the people who were on Wylie is gone. Fr. Rice and Fr. Lappan agree its wrong.... This is a big chariot upon which one can ride to self-glorification — it's a temple to materialism and profit and efficiency at the sacrifice of everything we believe in.".... Here's proof: even Steve McCarthy is tottering.... There's a lot of enthusiasm on the part of 6 or 8 youngsters. We are trying to slow them up so nothing will be built up on emotionalism or romanticism.... I would like to get some opinion from N.Y. When you pass this on to D.D tell her she didn't see the third floor when she was here. I think the expansion of the third floor is what caused most of the upsetting or rather aggravated a bum situation that was lacking c.w. principles.50

Another example of dissension within the Pittsburgh house exists in a letter from Alan Kistler to "Tim." Again, as the letter is in Marquette University's Archives, it presumably was written to and saved by the Catholic Worker of New York. The main theme in the first six paragraphs consists of a complaint against Charles Francis Barrett. Barrett had dismissed Frank Hensler (Fr. Hensler's brother) and Kistler wondered how Fr. Hensler and Fr. Rice would take the news. Kistler then mentioned that Peter Maurin had visited on Sunday and left Monday night. Kistler complained that Barrett "shined up to Peter and monopolized him all day Monday." Kistler believed that Barrett wrongly influenced Maurin in his attitude toward Tim because of Tim's association with Communists.51 Charles Francis Barrett was the son of a DuPont engineer whom both Rice and Kistler thought "brilliant." Barrett was well read and could quote Rerum Novarum or a Supreme Court decision — but he also feuded with Rice and attempted to take control of St. Joseph's, which even came to the attention of Dorothy Day. Barrett developed delusional mental health issues and eventually moved out of St. Joseph's.52
A letter from CRA member Rita Gill at this time to Dorothy Day did not mention any dissension but reported on all the good that was being done at the Pittsburgh House. She reported that the House had received a donation of 40 beds with mattresses and bed springs. They had to stop operating the medical clinic, but now they drove men to Mercy Hospital. The House had created sitting rooms for men to use who came just for food. Gill described the religious education classes they were holding for neighborhood children and a sewing school for local mothers using donated sewing machines. She also reported on the success of the labor schools and that a retreat had been conducted for the men of the House to celebrate the anniversary of the opening of St. Joseph's. Rita Gill then closed the letter with her anticipation of having Dorothy Day visit soon and meet Gill's mother.53 Rita Gill did not mention dissension in the House, but it is obvious that members of the CRA still looked to Day as their leader to whom they reported on the progress of their activities.

That same week's edition of The Pittsburgh Catholic reported that Dorothy Day would be speaking in Pittsburgh to the University Club on December 4 at Central Catholic High School's auditorium on her latest book, House of Hospitality.54

World War II: Pacifism and Conscientious Objection
The Second World War started with Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. The tensions that already existed within St. Joseph's only increased over the issues of pacifism and conscientious objection. These tensions existed not only within Pittsburgh's CRA and St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, but within the Catholic Worker movement on a national level.

Three priests who were associated with Pittsburgh were influential in shaping Dorothy Day's attitude toward war. One of the co-founders of the Catholic Radical Alliance, Msgr. George Barry O'Toole, accompanied Dorothy Day to Washington, D.C. in their mutual efforts to oppose the proposed compulsory military training law, the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.55 Day spoke in front of the Senate Military Affairs Committee on the Catholic Worker's opposition to the draft:

We believe that Christianity is the only practical solution to the world's problems, a solution which has not been practiced... and because we believe that the counsels of Christ must be kept alive in the world.56

Another Pittsburgh priest who had an influence on Day's pacifism was Fr. John J. Hugo. Hugo's influence on Day's spirituality was immense and well known and beyond the scope of this article. The Selective Training and Service Act did become law in September 1940, and Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker position only became more resolved. Hugo wrote a note to Day:

No doubt [pacifism] is all clear to you; but then you have not tried to work it out doctrinally. If you knew no theology, it would probably be simpler to make a solution. Yet the decision must be based on doctrine. Pacifism must proceed from truth, or it cannot exist at all. And of course this attack on conscription is the most extreme form of pacifism.57

According to Day's biographer, William Miller, the pacifism of Day and the Catholic Worker stemmed from reasons of history and the suspicion of capitalist war mongering and profiteering. Fr. Hugo was suggesting that Catholic opposition to war should be based on Scripture and the teachings of the Church.

Some Catholic Worker houses stopped selling the New York Catholic Worker newspaper because of Day's strict pacifism. Day wrote an article suggesting that those houses no longer belonged to the movement. Her statement was directed at St. Francis House in Seattle. Fr. H. A. Reinhold of the Seattle House sent a letter of protest to Day. He thought it wrong for the whole movement to be centered on this one issue and that she should not adopt a dictator's method toward dissension.58

Fr. Hans Ansgar Reinhold (1897-1968) was another priest with a Pittsburgh connection. Reinhold is best known as the co-founder of Orate Fratres (later Worship) with Fr. Virgil Michel, O.S.B. Both of these priests were influential in the liturgical movement that culminated with the reforms of Vatican Council II. Reinhold, a native of Germany, discovered the writings of Father Romano Guardini (1885-1968) after serving in the front lines of World War I. Reinhold then spent a year with the Benedictines at the Abbey of Maria Laach, considered the birthplace of liturgical renewal in Europe. Deeply related to the Benedictine efforts at liturgical renewal was the renewal's relation to Catholic Social Action. After Hitler came to power, Reinhold hoped to publicize the idea that the Nazis were persecuting both Jews and Christians. He believed there was little difference between the Nazis and Bolshevicks. His bishop, Hermann Wilhelm Berning of Osnabrück, disagreed with Reinhold, and labeled Reinhold a Bolshevnik. Reinhold opposed the signing of the Concordat between Germany and the Vatican in July 1933. A year later, Reinhold was arrested by the Gestapo, but released. He continued to publicly oppose the regime. In Spring 1935, he fled to England for fear of being rearrested by the Gestapo. But his bishop sent word that he was not a true refugee and that he was officially on leave without permission. He came to the United States in 1936, but had a difficult time functioning as a priest because American bishops believed Reinhold's German bishop. It was

53 Letter of Rita Gill to Dorothy Day (November 29, 1939), DD-CWC.
54 "Dorothy Day Coming to Address Members of University Club," The Pittsburgh Catholic (November 30, 1939), 16.
55 Public Law 783, 76th Congress, approved September 16, 1940.
57 Id., 68.
58 Id., 169.
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Dorothy Day who had prompted Reinhold to come to the U.S. and for
a time helped find a place for him to live in the Diocese of Brooklyn.
Reinhold eventually found his way to the Benedictines at St. John's Abbey
in Collegeville (Minnesota) and then to Seattle. Reinhold spent the last
years of his life in Pittsburgh, at the insistence of Bishop John Wright.59

Fr. Reinhold influenced Fr. Charles Owen Rice to abandon the pacifism
of Dorothy Day and back Roosevelt's war effort. Rice admitted
Reinhold's influence on his rejection of pacifism in a later Pittsburgh
Catholic column.60

In June 1940, Dorothy Day wrote a circular letter to all Catholic
Worker houses that asserted that pacifism was a central doctrine to the
Catholic Worker movement. This was the letter to which Fr. Reinhold
had responded. Fr. Rice also wrote to Day on August 13, 1940, saying
that he was glad to get the letter, but

You will probably be shocked, though, to find out (sic) that I feel
differently from you in the matter of Conscription and other military
matters. I am afraid I have become a "war monger". I turned over
your letter to Allan (sic) Kistler; he has been our active "Peace Man",
locally, but Allan (sic) and the others did nothing about it because they
are not conscientious objectors. I hope you do not feel that we have all
"let your (sic) down" but we have to "call them as we see them."61

However, a Catholic Radical Alliance column in The Pittsburgh Catholic
of September 12, 1940 stated that a new Pax discussion group had started.
The article quoted the letter from Dorothy Day that declared that
those who were not pacifists should not consider themselves
Catholic Workers and that those who wanted to perform the Works
of Mercy should do so, but not as Catholic Workers. The article
mentioned that Alan Kistler, Joe Brig, Rita Gill, and Brother Matthew
Queen belonged to the Pax group. The article, written by Lawrence
Sullivan, reflected the consensus of the group to not separate from the
Catholic Worker movement.62

The Brother Matthew Queen mentioned in the article was a Maryknoll
Brother who had received permission from his superiors to live at St.
Joseph's House of Hospitality in Pittsburgh. He must have arrived in
Pittsburgh in late April or early May 1940. He came from Akron and
had knowledge of the Catholic Worker there as well as the Catholic
Worker on the West Coast. He appears to have been on a first name
basis with Dorothy Day. In his first letter to her from Pittsburgh, he
mentioned that he had attended a "good" CRA meeting and quoted
from a talk given by Fr. Hugo who "calls for a willingness to sacrifice
any material convenience for the sake of the reconstruction of a

Christian Society."63 But in a later letter to Day, Brother Matthew claimed:
Here they have gotten off the track in many ways, as you know.
However, on Friday nights a group meets here ... recite Compline
together in the chapel, and study Catholic pronouncements on peace.
They are earnest, but have not yet caught up with the C.W. ideal.64

Then in a September letter to Day, Brother Matthew mentioned that
Pittsburgh priest Fr. Thomas R. Murphy and his lawyer brother John F.
Murphy were enthusiastic conscientious objectors, but most attendees at
a recent conscientious objector meeting were Protestant. He then stated,
"I admire this House for its great undertaking, but wonder at the lack of
a liturgical spirit, the failure to study C.W. Aims and Purposes."65

Dorothy Day visited St. Joseph's House in Pittsburgh for a short visit in
the latter part of November 1940. She spoke to a "fairly large group"
on the counsels of perfection. She believed that these counsels —
voluntary poverty, chastity, and complete obedience — applied to
people as well as professed religious.66 Day's first retreat with Fr. John
Hugo was not until July 1941, but it was evident that she was already
thinking in the strict spiritual terms that Hugo preached.

Establishment of St. Francis House of Hospitality

It would be easy to classify the establishment of another House of
Hospitality on Pittsburgh's South Side as a further example of
dissension at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality or within the Catholic
Radical Alliance. The beginning of St. Francis House of Hospitality
at 12 Pius Street does point to dissatisfaction by some CRA members
with St. Joseph's on Tannehill Street. Members of St. Francis House of
Hospitality were also members of the previously mentioned Pax
group. But the break with St. Joseph's was not really a "break." The
first mention of St. Francis House in The Pittsburgh Catholic was in
the March 27, 1941 issue. On page one, a small paragraph was titled
"South Side to Have House of Hospitality." The unsigned column
simply stated: "Another Catholic center for the works of mercy," similar
to those already established would open at 12 Pius Street on Palm
Sunday.67 In the same edition of the paper, there was a column under
the title of "St. Joseph's House of Hospitality," signed by A. K. (Alan
Kistler). Kistler was one of the members of St. Francis House, but in
this St. Joseph column, he said that the house (St. Joseph's) continued
day after day, that there were problems, but "the poor are always with
us." He asked for the readers' help.68

It is very interesting that on page three of the same issue, there was a
"Catholic Radical Alliance" column written by Lawrence Sullivan
which made no mention of St. Francis House or St. Joseph House, and

60 Charles Owen Rice, Dorothy Day and World War II Pacifism. Pittsburgh Catholic (November 7, 1997), 5.
61 Letter of Charles Owen Rice to Dorothy Day (August 13, 1940), DD-CWC.
62 Lawrence Sullivan, "Catholic Radical Alliance, The CRA and War," The Pittsburgh Catholic (September 12, 1940), 9.
63 Letter of Br. Matthew Queen to Dorothy Day (May 4, 1940), DD-CWC.
64 Letter of Br. Matthew Queen to Dorothy Day (August 25, 1940), DD-CWC.
65 Letter of Br. Matthew Queen to Dorothy Day (September 12, 1940), DD-CWC.
68 "South Side to Have House of Hospitality," The Pittsburgh Catholic (March 27, 1941), 1.
69 See Alan Kistler, "St. Joseph's House of Hospitality," The Pittsburgh Catholic (March 27, 1941), 12.
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was didactic in nature. The subtitle of the column was "Revolutionary Cell." Sullivan defined revolution and radical as they applied to the Catholic Social Movement and the fight for social justice:

The Catholic Social Movement is revolutionary, because it aims to uproot the decaying bodies of liberalism, the more vigorous shoots of Communism and Fascism, and the vague ethics of opportunism and selfishness that are considered normal and traditional today.70

It may have been that there was pressure to write something or lose the columns in the diocesan paper but the beginning of a potential rival house of hospitality a short distance from the larger house was not reported in The Pittsburgh Catholic as a rival enterprise. The friendly relation is also alluded to in a letter from members of St. Francis House to Dorothy Day. The letter mentioned that St. Francis House's rent was paid for by two members who donated their earnings and that the House had been blessed by a Passionist. The letter also mentioned that Fr. Rice had visited. On the reverse side of the letter is a more personal letter from Brother Matthew in which he stated that he would run the House, but that the group would run me." He also mentioned that Joe Breig said that St. Francis would be the real director. The Brother went on to say that there was no break with St. Joseph's House and that Rice and the staff from St. Joseph's were friendly.71

Then on June 12-14, 1941 Dorothy Day visited both St. Joseph and St. Francis houses in Pittsburgh. She reported her stay in the Catholic Worker. She said that St. Joseph's was the only house in the movement that had a priest in charge. She recounted how hard the house had it in the beginning, retelling the story about having pan trip soup and sassafras tea for a week. But now because of Fr. Rice's begging, the men were served three good meals daily. She conveyed a good impression of the spirit of the House in that there was efficiency and informality because the place was staffed mostly by those who came there in need. There was daily Mass, Benediction and rosary. St. Joseph's also served as a community center with meetings and neighborhood children were taken on picnics.

Day also mentioned that Fr. Rice was very involved in union activities and that she spent some time with Amy Ballinger, head of the laundry workers' union which had 1,400 members, 75% of them Catholic and 80% women. Day expressed the hope that New York would go on apace. 73

Visited Brother Matthew's St. Francis House, which is a center on the top of a high hill, looking out over the city and surrounded by various institutions belonging to the Passionists. The group at St. Francis work with families in the neighborhood, and is a center rather than a House of Hospitality. We could do with many centers in many towns. Groups come in for discussion, books and pamphlets and papers are kept circulating and Peter's favorite work of "indoctrination" goes on apace.73

On July 3-11, she attended a retreat given by Fr. John Hugo at St. Anthony's orphanage in Oakmont. "It was a time of real study, to put off the old man and on the new, and we came out with a real sense of renewal..."75

Tension between the Two Houses of Hospitality

The first real evidence of tension between the two houses is seen in a letter from Alan Kistler to Dorothy Day. Kistler took Day to task because she implied that St. Francis House was not a House of Hospitality. He stated that they fed about 120 every day and 7 to 10 slept there every night. "And when there are no more beds, Brother and Tommie give up theirs and sleep on the floor. (I have yet to hear of Father Rice doing this)." Kistler reported that Day said in the Catholic Worker paper that St. Francis was an intellectual center whose mission was "indoctrination." He rebuked her for calling St. Francis House "Brother Matthew's St. Francis House" and observed that she did not realize the effect her paragraph in the Catholic Worker had — because it gave Father Rice more ammunition to disparage St. Francis House, for which he was working for "its collapse."76

Dorothy Day's response to Kistler does not exist, but in a subsequent letter Kistler apologized for his remarks about Rice and accepted her just criticism. Kistler, in a later interview, did not mention any tension between Rice and St. Francis House of Hospitality. He said that Rice believed that the St. Francis House would serve a purpose. He was untruthful in the later interview. Alan and Marie Kistler had nothing but praise and admiration for Msgr. Rice. In the same interview, Kistler also mentioned the formation of a Catholic Evidence Guild, started by Frs. John Hugo and Louis Farina.77 Kistler would join them with their street preaching efforts in the Hill District. St. Francis House of Hospitality existed until at least 1942, but when most of the young men were drafted into the army, Brother Matthew could not keep it going by himself.78

70 Lawrence Sullivan, "Catholic Radical Alliance," The Pittsburgh Catholic (March 27, 1941), 3.
71 Letter of Br. Matthew Queen to Dorothy Day (April 17, 1941), DD-CWC.
72 Dorothy Day, "Day After Day - July/August 1941," The Catholic Worker (July/August 1941), 1, 3, appearing at: http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/Reprint2.cfm?TextID=373.
73 Id.
74 John Hugo (1911-1985) was a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. He directed the eight-day silent retreats attended by Dorothy Day, which she began in 1940 and continued until 1976. He was a spiritual guide and advisor to Day through his many letters and visits to her, and became indirectly the spiritual director of the Catholic Worker Movement.
75 Dorothy Day, "Day After Day - July/August 1941", The Catholic Worker (July/August 1941), loc.cit.
76 Letter of Alan Kistler to Dorothy Day (August 13, 1941), DD-CWC.
77 Louis Farina (1908-1981), a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, was superintendent and chaplain at St. Anthony Orphanage from 1935 to 1951. He was one of five priest-brothers; the others were Albert, Joseph, Wilbert, and Edward.
78 Interview of the author with Alan and Marie Kistler (July 30, 1991).
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The Lasting Influence of Dorothy Day
Dorothy Day’s influence was significant and substantial vis-à-vis the beginning of St. Joseph House of Hospitality in Pittsburgh. She and the movement she started provided both inspiration and practical advice on the establishment of a radical Catholic Christian witness to the social problems that existed in Pittsburgh in the waning years of the Great Depression and the early years of World War II. These extraordinary times also produced an extraordinary response from lay people and clergy who tried to live out their faith according to Dorothy Day’s radical vision.

As mentioned above, the Catholic Church has recognized Dorothy Day as a candidate for sainthood. She is the subject of numerous books and articles and even a movie. But most importantly, she continues to challenge laity and clergy alike to accept the radical challenge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. She and the movement she started have had a far-reaching influence on many members of the clergy and laity. Monsignor Charles Owen Rice is well known as a “Labor Priest” and had a long and colorful career as a parish priest, activist and columnist for The Pittsburgh Catholic. Alan Kistler had a noteworthy career in the Labor Movement and in public service. St. Joseph House of Hospitality in Pittsburgh is today a program of Catholic Charities and continues to serve and house older homeless men. In the 1930’s, the men and women who participated in the Catholic Radical Alliance, the Catholic Worker Movement, St. Joseph House of Hospitality, the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, and the burgeoning Catholic Social Movement were by their very lives the definition of a living and flourishing Church.