

The Morning Star

Wycliffe College Community Newsletter



Dorothy Day: “Gloriously different” sainthood

By David Kupp

With World Writers Day having been celebrated earlier this month, and World Book Day (as declared by the United Nations) coming up on April 3, it seems a fitting time to revisit the story of 20th century journalist, author, and social activist Dorothy Day.

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“How monotonously alike all the great tyrants and conquerors have been; how gloriously different are the saints.” - C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Dorothy Day fits C.S. Lewis’ “gloriously different,” and the Vatican has decided she’s on her way to sainthood.

Day’s early life tells a complicated story, a rambunctious and articulate pursuit of meaning and authenticity. Born in 1897, in her teens she was already a Greenwich Village bohemian literati, in her 20s a single mother, a veteran of women’s rights campaigns, a known voice in the socialist press, with life-defining experiences of abortion, failed marriage, and two suicide attempts behind her. She enunciated the causes and issues of socialists, trade unionists, industrial workers, and anarchists.

A dramatic conversion

And at 30, dramatically, passionately, Dorothy Day converted to Catholicism.

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Amidst the dark days of the American Depression, hers became a life of tireless compassion in the Christian fight for the poor and oppressed. She engaged in countless acts of disobedience, and was frequently jailed. She poured her considerable literary energies into 40 years of editing the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, cofounded with Peter Maurin, offering progressive teaching on Catholic social justice. The *Catholic Worker* became the foundation for a series of autonomous Catholic Worker communes and houses of hospitality, intentional communities that fed and sheltered the poor. More than 200 still exist to this day across the U.S., Canada, and beyond.

Her decades of mobilized services to the poor, her biblical, theological and political critique of the systems that shackled the poor, her invitation of thousands of volunteers to join in all reflected her personal piety and generosity.

Her vital and difficult story provides perhaps one reason why Pope Francis singled Dorothy Day out for praise. In his electrifying address in Washington DC on September 24th, 2015, he included Day in a quartet of Americans, with Thomas Merton, Martin Luther King Jr and Abraham Lincoln. In his challenge to the US Congress (a first for a Pope), Francis called for action on poverty, climate change, immigration and capital punishment, and he hailed Day as an icon of social justice and rights. Rush Limbaugh was apoplectic; Bernie Sanders was delighted; Donald Trump was dismissive.

“Her social activism, her passion for justice and for the cause of the oppressed, were inspired by the Gospel, her faith, and the example of the saints,” said the pontiff.

Then, mostly because I didn't want to leave but also because I didn't know what to do next, I sang.

A deep debt articulated

Daniel Berrigan was a member of Dorothy Day's uniquely-gifted 20th century Catholic cohort of writers and activists (along with Thomas Merton, Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy, John Courtney Murray, John Kennedy Toole and others). Also jailed as an anti-war activist, Berrigan articulated American Catholicism's deep debt to Dorothy Day. He would write that while reading Miller's history of Day and the *Catholic Worker*:

"I stayed up all night, unable to put the book aside. What held me in thrall was an absolutely stunning consistency. No to all killing. Invasions, incursions, excusing causes, call of the blood, summons to the bloody flag, casuistic body counts, just wars, necessary wars, religious wars, needful wars, holy wars—into the fury of the murderous crosswinds went her simple word: *no*."

In the end, few Catholics in America have ever grappled more profoundly, or written and marched more passionately, about the social and political structures that exclude and marginalize. The integrity of her positions on peace, justice, the sanctity of life and Jesus' Gospel are compelling.

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To read the complete article, visit the *Wycliffe* blog, "Vestigia Dei—Traces of God" at wycliffecollege.ca/blog

About the Author

David Kupp is Professor of Pastoral Theology at Wycliffe College.

Upcoming Events

The Changing Role of the Brethren “Love Feast” — Mar 27

Coming up March 27, 3:15 pm at #TST, the first 2019 TST Liturgy Seminar. Jeremy McClung, a PhD student at @Wycliffe_UofT, will speak on The Changing Role of the Brethren 'Love Feast'. <https://www.facebook.com/events/421537418653408/>

Poetry for the Journey with Malcolm Guite — April 1, Monday at 7 p.m.

An event brought to you by Wycliffe College in partnership with IMAGO. Malcolm will read some selected poetry and discuss the role of imagination in the journey of faith. There will also be special music with Celtic harp musician Esther-Ruth Teel. Sign up: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/poetry-for-the-journey-tickets-57549887262>

Theology Pub — April 5, Friday at 7 p.m.

There is a fascination in today's world with the unseen world. What are Christians to think about witches, warlocks, ghosts, demons, psychokinesis (or telekinesis), and other occult, spiritual, and other-worldly phenomena? Our guest, David Reed, acted as a theological expert for forty different paranormal cases presented on Ghostly Encounters, which ran for 2005 to 2011. David in conversation with Steve Hewko, will dig deeper into this topic. A question and answer period will follow. See you on Friday in Leonard Hall at 7 p.m.! No registration is required.

A promotional banner for 'Theology Pub' with a textured orange background. On the left is a stylized black and white illustration of a beer mug with foam, containing the text 'THEOLOGY PUB'. On the right, the text reads: 'WHEN: Last Friday of every month, 7:00pm', 'WHERE: Leonard Hall, Wycliffe College', and logos for 'the meeting house' and 'Wycliffe College'.

The Plight of the Middle Eastern Church: A Lunch with Rev Dr Canon White — April 29

Join us for a light lunch and hear from our special guest The Rev. Dr. Canon Andrew White. This event is open to the public but space is limited. *Note this event has been moved from Apr 1 to 29th. Sign up: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-plight-of-the-middle-eastern-church-a-lunch-with-rev-dr-canon-white-tickets-58655070896>

News & Announcements

From the Registrar

Featured Summer Course: Bonhoeffer on Scripture, Christ, and Church: New Perspectives taught by David Clark will be offered over four Saturdays: May 4, 11, 25, and June 1 (9:00am – 4:30pm). The course will introduce students to the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer by exploring his approaches to biblical interpretation, Christology, and ecclesiology. Students unfamiliar with Bonhoeffer will benefit from this accessible introduction to his writings; students familiar with his more popular works will benefit from exploring selections of his lesser-known writings.

Registration for summer courses opens April 1, 2019. All courses in the summer session are now available on the website. Learn more at: www.wycliffecollege.ca/summercourses.

April 29th—TST Language Exams and Registration

Please note that TST Language exams will take place on April 29th. Please register by April 19th. See details here: <https://www.tst.edu/academic/language-exams-courses>

Chapel Services

Morning Prayer
Mon-Fri, 8:30 a.m.

Wine Before Breakfast
Tue, 7:22 a.m.

Taize Evening Prayer
Mon, 5:30 p.m.

Sung Evensong
Tue, 5:30 p.m.

Community Eucharist
Wed, 4:45 p.m.

Prayer & Praise
Thu, 5:00 p.m.

Informal Evening Prayer
Fri, 5:30 p.m.

More Event(s) Coming Up

Preaching Day — May 11, 2019

This year Dr Joseph Mangina and the Rev. Dr. Annette Brownlee will be looking at the gospel of the beloved disciple, the book of John. Dr Mangina is close to completing a new book on John's gospel while Dr Brownlee's recently released book *Preaching Jesus Christ Today* provides a constructive approach for the busy preacher who seeks to be faithful to the text. <https://www.wycliffecollege.ca/preachingday>



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