

2006

## The Catholic Worker and Focolare: a search for models of lay ecclesial identity in the lay apostolate

Daniel Benison Sarell  
*University of Dayton*

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THE CATHOLIC WORKER AND FOCOLARE –  
A SEARCH FOR MODELS OF LAY ECCLESIAL IDENTITY  
IN THE LAY APOSTOLATE

Thesis

Submitted to

The College of Arts and Sciences  
Department of Religious Studies of the  
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
The Degree  
Master of Arts in Theological Studies

by

Daniel Benison Sarell  
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

Dayton, Ohio

November 2006

**Approved by:**

A black rectangular box redacting a signature.

**Faculty Advisor**

A black rectangular box redacting a signature.

**Faculty Reader**

A black rectangular box redacting a signature.

**Faculty Reader**

A black rectangular box redacting a signature.

**Chairperson**

## ABSTRACT

### THE CATHOLIC WORKER AND FOCOLARE – A SEARCH FOR MODELS OF LAY ECCLESIAL IDENTITY IN THE LAY APOSTOLATE

Name: Sarell, Daniel Benison  
University of Dayton

Advisor: Dr. Sandra Yocum Mize

The Catholic Worker and Focolare are lay movements in the Catholic Church, which have different origins and structures. Both were innovative for their lay leadership and social witness were concerned about the poor and the contemporary challenges in modern society to Catholic faith, particularly from secularization, individualism and materialism. Focolare and the Catholic Worker sought alternative social models, which apply their particular Catholic beliefs to programmes to the formation of small lay communities. Focolare has a very formal structure, and their statutes, or "Rule," were approved by the Holy See in 1962, while Catholic Worker is a completely voluntary association with no formal structure or leadership and no official relationship to the hierarchy of the Church.

The object of this thesis is to demonstrate how Focolare and the Catholic Worker provide applicable lessons by which Catholic laity today can respond to their baptismal vocation to apostolic mission in the everyday cultural circumstances in

which they live. Unlocking these lessons requires an examination of communion ecclesiology, which distinguishes the particular ecclesial identities and missionary contexts of both the laity and the clerical hierarchy within the Church's universal vocation to holiness and mission to salvation.

The first chapter explores the secular character and missionary focus of the lay vocation, which calls the laity to transform the structures of secular society by working for peace and justice. The origins of Focolare and the Catholic Worker provide applicable lessons for the Catholic laity today to discern and respond to their particular vocation.

The second chapter surveys how both movements exemplify a balance between communitarian and personalist dimensions, providing a model of complementarity inherent to ecclesial communion. The third chapter deals with the importance of integrating Catholic values and beliefs with the circumstances of everyday life of family, work and community and how both Focolare and the Catholic Worker have witnessed to this integration through the establishment of social services to the poor, advocacy of labor and alternative social structures. This thesis concludes that these lay movements have gone out on a limb to show the Church a way to sanctity, breaking new ground and providing prophetic precedents for the Church to follow, though not necessarily to replicate.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i>
CIC	<i>Codex Juris Canonici</i>
CL	<i>Christifideles Laici</i>
DV	<i>Dei Verbum</i>
EoC	Economy of Communion
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
PO	<i>Presbyterium Ordinis</i>
RM	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i>

## INTRODUCTION

Among the more theologically and socially dynamic developments in the Catholic Church around the world since Vatican II have been the growth of lay movements. For many, these movements signal deeper and more intentionally communitarian spiritualities among the Catholic laity. Not all lay movements are the same. Some, like Focolare, are led by laypersons, who take vows and live in contemplative communities with other permanent members. Other movements, like the Catholic Worker, are completely voluntary and have no formal structure or official relationship to the hierarchy of the Church.<sup>1</sup> Each movement bears its own particular charisms, or gifts of vocation and mission,<sup>2</sup> like the more

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<sup>1</sup> "One Spirit in Action: Upcoming Events," *One Spirit at Work: Ecclesial Movements and New Communities* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2004). Archdiocese of New York [Website]; available from <http://www.nyarchdiocese.org/pastoral/~>. One notable exception is the New York Catholic Worker, which participates in the New York Archdiocese's Council of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities. Rosalie Rielgle Troester, ed., *Voices of the Catholic Worker* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993). In an interview which appears in Troester's 1993 compilation of remembrances, Catholic Worker Gary Donatello confirms the point that the New York Catholic Worker houses are more allied with the institutional church than other houses. Nevertheless, there is no central authority or statutes by which a particular Catholic Worker community is accountable to the movement as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> Gerard O'Collins and Edward G. Farrugia, *A Concise Dictionary of Theology* (New York City: Paulist Press, 2000), 40.

traditional congregations of religious. However, what sets these movements apart from religious congregations is their autonomy of governance from the hierarchical structures of the Church and their more outwardly-directed missionary focus on the everyday circumstances in which most people live.<sup>3</sup>

Through their examples of lay leadership, social witness, and by their exemplification of communion ecclesiology, the Catholic movements, Focolare and the Catholic Worker, demonstrate applicable principles by which Catholic laity today can respond to their baptismal calling to apostolic ministry in the world (*ad extra*, or "toward the outside").<sup>4</sup> While the attempt here is specifically not to dichotomize the "world" from the "church," the key distinction of roles in the Church, between the ordained clergy and the baptized laity, is that the former's defined focus is to support the latter's vocation to spread the gospel of Christ within the secular world. The clergy support this secular vocation of the laity (or "secularity") by governing, teaching and sanctifying the People of God from inside (*ad intra*) the hierarchical structures of the Church.<sup>5</sup> The two major

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<sup>3</sup>Antonio Maria Sicari, "Ecclesial Movements: A New Framework for Ancient Charisms," *Communio* 29 (Summer 2002), 290-291.

<sup>4</sup>John E. Linnan, "Ministry since Vatican II: A Time of Change and Growth," *New Theology Review* 3, no. 1 (1990), 34. Linnan is a priest of the Clerics of St. Viator and teaches at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

<sup>5</sup>"Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests." Interdicasterial Instruction. (Washington, DC: USCC, 1988). Premiss; John Paul II, *On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World (Christifideles Laici)*. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation. (Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1988), #23 (hereafter, "CL"); "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apoostolicam Actuositatem*) [November 1965]," in *Vatican Council II*, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1996), #2. Hereafter "AA." See "Abbreviations" for references to ecclesiastical documents.

principles that Focolare and the Catholic Worker will be shown to demonstrate in this project include, first, each movement's particular pursuit of balancing the proper role of the individual in society, or personalism, as well as those things which bring order to communities, (Chapter Two), their communitarian dimensions. Second, each movement's integration of the Catholic faith into the everyday aspects of community life and work will also be examined (Chapter Three). The examples of each movement's activities might tend toward the prophetic or radical, and their principles often run counter to the dominant culture or against what they perceive to be negative, anti-religious trends in their society. These movements have intentionally served as a vanguard for revolutionary change in society, though the changes they hope to affect apply directly to the more ordinary (even mundane) aspects of life, particularly work and social organization. These principles will be applied to how the Catholic laity today can actively respond to their baptismal vocation, whether they feel called to imitate the extraordinary and prophetic search for social change that the movement's exemplify or simply want to translate those principles and activities as they apply to their ordinary work-a-day experience. The grace of baptism calls all Christ's faithful, both lay and ordained, to personal holiness, community solidarity and to evangelization of the social and cultural circumstances in which they live and to which they are called, appropriate to the state of life of each.

By using the term "communitarian," this study refers to a worldview, which places the needs of the community, the "common good," ahead of individual liberty, while recognizing the intrinsic value and dignity of each individual and the responsibility each person bears.<sup>6</sup> The term "personalism" is used to refer to a non-ideological philosophy, which promotes the intrinsic and spiritual dignity of the human person. All such social or cultural 'labels' in the context of this thesis will be filtered through the teachings of the Roman Catholic tradition, despite any inevitable overlap with other philosophies and political ideologies. An example of this Catholic 'filter' would include the understanding of each individual as made in the 'image and likeness of God,' as opposed to grounding the operative view of the individual in, for example, the more the rights-based language of secular liberalism. Another example includes the belief that the ultimate fulfillment in human life comes to humanity not materially but spiritually in the hoped for Kingdom of God, which is both present here-and-now and whose completion is faithfully anticipated by Christians. A 'consistent ethic of life,' which seeks to protect human life from conception to natural death, can be viewed as a

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<sup>6</sup> Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), 110-111. Doyle compares the social view of the brothers (Michael and Kenneth) Himes and then-Cardinal Ratzinger (Benedict XVI), attributing to both a moderate sense of communitarianism, especially in balancing the concepts of common good and individual rights and dignity. Doyle distinguishes the Himes' moderate communitarianism from the two extremes of "liberal individualism" and "radical communitarianism," stating, "in accord with their reading of Catholic social teaching, [the Himeses] opt for a moderate form of communitarianism that still values individual rights strongly as it contextualizes those rights within a concern for the community."

'personalist' ethic. Similarly, advocacy for the legal abolition of abortion, even in a pluralistic society, on the basis that it serves the common good, can be viewed as a 'communitarian' position, and one that integrates the personalist ethic of life.

The search for balance between the 'personal' and the 'communitarian,' can serve as practical means by which Catholic disciples are able to live out an understanding of Church as communion, or communion ecclesiology. This balance also distinguishes both communitarianism (as a worldview) and communion (as an ecclesiology) from mere 'collectivism,' because the individual is never 'lost in the crowd.'<sup>7</sup> Rather, when communion ecclesiology is lived authentically in community, such as in a lay Catholic movement, each person is recognized as having distinctive gifts, which grace fosters for one's own holiness and invites that person to responsibly and positively contribute to the life and holiness of his or her community. Likewise, that person's community may gratefully utilize these gifts for fostering and witnessing peace and justice in the world.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, the integration of the everyday circumstances of secular life with the Catholic faith reveals the nature of the laity's baptismal calling, which is

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 108; Richard W. Garnett, "Catholicism and American Freedom: A History," review of *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History*, by John T. McGreevy, *Michigan Law Reviews* (May 1, 2004). High Beam Research [database on-line]. Garnett, reviewing McGreevy's history of Catholic and American freedom, emphasizes that "Catholic social teaching is not reducible to the amorphous 'communitarianism' that is fashionable in many circles, to statist collectivism, or even to centralization generally ... [Further,] the principle of 'subsidiarity' serves as a bulwark against both excessive individualism and stultifying centralization."

<sup>8</sup> AA #3.

to live and witness the self-giving, unifying love of God and the promise of the Kingdom of God in the secular world, both in private family life and in public community life. This secular calling, however, does not preclude lay participation in the internal ministry of the Church. However, the Magisterium of the Catholic Church has actively discerned throughout the decades since Vatican II how that internal, apostolic collaboration between the clergy and the laity in ministry (*ad intra*) is most appropriately exercised.<sup>9</sup> For the purposes of scope, this paper will not address those issues surrounding this "lay ecclesial ministry," primarily because they do not apply for the most part to the examples of lay leadership given by Focolare and the Catholic Worker.<sup>10</sup> Rather, the more recently

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<sup>9</sup> The following documents provide a trajectory for these developments: "Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests." When page numbers are not referred to in this document, then the citation derives from the online version of this document available from the Vatican Website at [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/laity/documents/~](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/~); John Paul II, *On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World (Christifideles Laici). Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation*; Linnan, "Ministry since Vatican II;" James Heft, SM, "Toward a Theology of Ecclesial Lay Ministry," in *Together in God's Service: Toward a Theology of Ecclesial Lay Ministry. Papers from a Colloquium* (Washington, DC: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Subcommittee on Lay Ministry, Committee on the Laity, 1998); National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on the Laity, *Gifts Unfolding* (Washington, DC: USCC, 1990); "A Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern," *Commonweal* 105, no. 4 (February 17, 1978); National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee on Lay Ministry, Committee on the Laity, *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions* (Washington, DC: USCC, 1999); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* (Washington, DC: USCCB, December 2005).

<sup>10</sup> The initial intent of this thesis project was to link the examples of Focolare and the Catholic Worker to lay ecclesial ministry. However, the particularly secular character of the lay vocation is demonstrated very powerfully in both movements. While many Catholic Workers and *focolarini* do serve in the whole range of ministries of the Church (Focolare has branches for clergy and religious), both lay and ordained, operating within the structures of the Church (*ad intra*) is not the *modus operandi* for either.

clarified<sup>11</sup> understanding of the laity's particularly secular and apostolic vocation, or lay apostolate, will be the examined and applied throughout this thesis.

Focolare and the Catholic Worker have both exemplified and shaped the theological and social maturation of the lay apostolate, though they have done so by very different means from each other and in different cultural contexts. The Catholic Worker is mostly an American phenomenon, reflecting many typical, conventional American Catholic principles as well as many radically counter-cultural ideas. Focolare, on the other hand, originated in Italy and reflects both aspects of traditional Italian piety as well as more modern spiritual innovations. Both movements have grown over time. Focolare in particular has grown more international in its scope and includes members of other Christian denominations and other religions. With the different cultural contexts of each movement in mind, this study will apply the pastoral teachings of the global Catholic Church specifically to the pastoral context of the Catholic Church in the United States.

Lay participation in the unified mission of the Body of Christ has been officially clarified throughout the pontificate of the John Paul II and thereafter, primarily in terms of understanding the Church as communion.<sup>12</sup> Communion

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<sup>11</sup> "Co-Workers in the Vineyard", Introduction, 5; John Paul II, *On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World (Christifideles Laici)*. *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation*; "Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests."

<sup>12</sup> Leonard Doohan, "Pope John Paul II's Vision of Collaboration and Empowerment," in *That They Might Live: Power, Empowerment and Leadership in the Church*, ed. Michael Downey (New York City: Crossroad, 1991), 67.

ecclesiology is defined by understanding that the Church is essentially a unified 'body,' but within that unity there exist diverse members with differing roles, which are interdependent and complementary (see note below for the use of the word "complementary").<sup>13</sup> The Body of Christ is also sacramental, meaning all of her members share in the Baptism of Christ,<sup>14</sup> unifying each to the Trinitarian God and to each other as a sign of Christ's resurrected presence in the world.<sup>15</sup> However, the primary role that will be examined here is that of the baptized lay faithful. The pastoral teaching of the Second Vatican Council made it clear that the laity's particular secular vocation, emanating from the sacramental grace of baptism, is to evangelize the Christian faith to the world (*ad extra*) in their everyday circumstances of work, family and public life.<sup>16</sup> Certain categories of

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<sup>13</sup> Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 12-13; CL #20; William E. May, "Curran's Attack on John Paul II Rebutted," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* (May 3, 2006), HPR Online [website]; available from [www.ignatius.com/magazines/hprweb/may03\\_2006.htm](http://www.ignatius.com/magazines/hprweb/may03_2006.htm). William E. May is the Michael J. McGivney Professor of Moral Theology at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at The Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Regarding use of the term "complementary," the term is used here in a manner consistent with John Paul II's "Theology of the Body," in the sense that complementarity refers more to the relationship of two or more whole beings (i.e. a man and a woman) *enriching* each other through self-giving and comprising a unified whole. This unity, however, depends on the differentiation of individuals (i.e. the natural difference between man and woman is "integral" and "asymmetrical"). This notion of complementarity differs from the notion that complementarity is the coming together of two or more "fractions," which then comprise a being made whole. This is an important paradox in understanding the intrinsically transcendent nature of ecclesial communion. May quotes John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" Address 17.6.

<sup>14</sup> LG #39.

<sup>15</sup> Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 12-13; LG #7.

<sup>16</sup> Gerard Foley, *Empowering the Laity* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1986), 49-50, 184; AA #4, 7, 29; Robert Royal, "Pondering the meaning of lay vocation (The Lion's Den)," *National Catholic Reporter* (December 9, 2005), High Beam Research [database online]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library/~](http://www.highbeam.com/library/~). Royal writes, "Secularity ... is the mode in which a Catholic rightly functions within the world (*saeculum* in Latin), a public space in which religion

this secular vocation will be examined, which include work, economics, and social ethics. How these 'areas' apply to the proper role of the laity in the apostolic mission of the Church, or the "lay apostolate," will be determined by how both Focolare and the Catholic Worker have demonstrated each principle. While natural families are certainly essential and fundamental to ecclesial communion, and families often belong to movements as well, this thesis will not deal with 'family life' as such. Rather, the level of social organization being examined here refers mostly to "intentional communities," which are groups of people who choose to associate with one another for some specific purpose, whether they physically live together or not. Movements are intentional communities, usually comprised of smaller, more local units that conglomerate to a larger organization or vision. As already mentioned, Focolare is very structured, complete with defined units and leadership structures. The Catholic Worker as a whole, however, is an informal association of local communities.

The lay apostolate includes 1) the collaboration of the lay faithful with the clergy in the internal ministries (*ad intra*) of the Church, which normatively belong to the clergy (the "apostolate of the hierarchy")<sup>17</sup> and 2) the work of bringing the

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cannot be directly implemented, but also a free zone in which we can carry out crucial tasks." Robert Royal is president of the Faith & Reason Institute in Washington.

<sup>17</sup> Indre Cuplinskis, "Guns and rosaries: the use of military imagery in the French-Canadian Catholic student newspaper JEC," *Historical Studies (Canadian Catholic Historical Association)* (January 1, 2005); High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library/doc3~](http://www.highbeam.com/library/doc3~). Cuplinskis writes, "Pius XI's encyclical *Ubi arcano*, 23 December 1922, is usually considered the document initiating Catholic Action, which was

gospel into every aspect of everyday life in the secular 'world' (*ad extra*), which properly belongs to the laity.<sup>18</sup> Participation in the apostolate of the hierarchy includes both the historical organizing of the laity in the form of "Catholic Action,"<sup>19</sup> as well as the more professional advent of lay ecclesial ministry. In this context, the ministry of the laity (in general) and "lay ecclesial ministry" (in particular), includes those apostolic works that conform to the lay apostolate (given any necessary delegation by proper ecclesiastical authority)<sup>20</sup> and lay ecclesial identity.<sup>21</sup> This thesis asserts that the examples of movements, like the Catholic Worker and Focolare provide applicable principles by which lay Catholic disciples may grow in their response to their baptismal vocation, which

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commonly defined as 'the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy.' This hierarchical mandate differentiated the movement from earlier lay organizations." "Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests." Article 1, Section 2.

<sup>18</sup> "Reinventing the Laity," *Commonweal* 119, no. 15 (September 11, 1992), 3; Philip J. Murnion, "The Laity and the Shape of Things to Come," *Commonweal* 119, no. 15 (September 11, 1992), 23; CL #9, quoting Pius XII ("Discourse to the New Cardinals, February 20, 1946"), "The Faithful, more precisely the lay faithful, find themselves on the front lines of the Church's life; for them the Church is the animating principle for human society." Philip Murnion is the director of the National Pastoral Life Center.

<sup>19</sup> Pius XI, *On the Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ (Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio)* (December 23, 1922), Catholic Community Forum [website]; available from [www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pope0259b.htm](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pope0259b.htm); accessed November 28, 2005, #58; AA #20; "Catholic Action" as such still exists in many countries around the world, but it is generally referred to in historical terms in the American context. The terms "lay apostolate" and "lay ministry" are more common in contemporary usage, though the former was once synonymous with Catholic Action and the latter is conceptually incomplete, because it distinguishes neither the ministry of the laity nor lay ecclesial ministry.

<sup>20</sup> "Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests," Premiss. When page numbers are not referred to in this document, then the citation derives from the online version of this document at [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/laity/documents/](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/).

<sup>21</sup> CL #23-24.

necessarily balances the personal and the communal dimensions of human society and integrate faith with culture. This project will first define the nature of the lay vocation, which reveals why personal-communitarian balance and faith-culture integration are so important, particularly for manifesting ecclesial communion by promoting more intentional consciousness of the three offices, or *tria munera*, of Christ (priest, prophet and king), which is shared by all the baptized in the form of the common priesthood of the baptized, prophetic witness of the gospel in the world, and the royal mission to bring about the Kingdom of God.<sup>22</sup>

A pastoral initiative to raise the vocational consciousness of the laity must be promoted throughout the Church both by the teaching and outreach of the clergy and by the laity's own initiative. Since this paper is dealing with bringing gospel values into secular life, the "larger community" in this context includes both the Church and the broader society, though no claim is being made here to dispense with the American principle of separating church and state or to endorse Integrism. Because of the complexities of those issues, most of the material here will only deal with how Catholics are called to live in a pluralistic society, where civil liberties, especially freedom of worship, are respected.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., #9; "Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests," Theological Principles, section 2. "The functions of the ordained minister, taken as a whole, constitute a single indivisible unity in virtue of their singular foundation in Christ ... It is signified and realized by the minister through the functions of teaching, sanctifying and governing the faithful."

However, this thesis does take the position that Christians have a right and duty to be faithful witnesses to their faith, even when they are participating in the secular structures of society, like politics and economics. Such a witness includes considerations of advocating for the common good, which may 'trump' individual liberties on occasion.

Despite the challenges both Focolare and the Catholic Worker have faced throughout their development, both movements will be shown to exhibit innovative principles that can point to a proper clarification of and new avenues for 1) lay leadership, 2) personalist communitarian organizing, including the principle of subsidiarity, and 3) prophetic social witness. In the broadest scope, this thesis contends that a widespread pastoral application and personal integration of the lessons derived from the extraordinary experiences of these lay movements can accomplish nothing less than the renewal and reconciliation between secular society and Christian faith.

These two movements have been selected for their historical significance to Catholic life and culture in the twentieth century. They have also been chosen for the diversity of their structures and expressions, which can lead to mutually beneficial dialogue and pastoral development for both the hierarchy and the laity. The major differences between the two movements include their 1) statuses (or lack thereof as is the case of the Catholic Worker) with the institutional Church,

and 2) the diversity of each movements' public and internal activities. Focolare is very formally structured in terms of membership status and well-defined leadership roles. While the members of Focolare, or *focolarini*, actively participate in social service, the focus of the movement's official activities tends to be on the formation and manifestation of unified group identity through a communal understanding of the movement's particular charism in relation to the universal communion of the Catholic Church and to all of humanity. The Catholic Worker, on the other hand, maintains no official membership or leadership structure. While Catholic Workers (those who choose to associate themselves with the movement) do engage in what could be called group formation (through roundtable discussions, conferences and by seeking to live the principles of their founders), their activities tend to focus on direct social service (e.g. feeding the poor, drug and alcohol counseling, etc.) and social witness (e.g. protesting war or advocating for the needs of the poor). Consistent with the principle of subsidiarity, the activities of the many local units of both movements are widely diverse.

Methodologically, this study is theological, which is by its very nature interdisciplinary.<sup>23</sup> The particular disciplinary emphases of this thesis, however,

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<sup>23</sup> Ben Myers, "Interdisciplinary Theology" (November 19, 2005), Faith and Theology: A Blog for Theological Scholarship and Contemporary Theological Reflection [website]; available from <http://faith-theology.blogspot.com/2005/11/interdisciplinary-theology.htm>; accessed July 21, 2006. Regarding the interdisciplinary nature of theological studies, Ben Myers, a postdoctoral

while not rigidly confined, will focus on ecclesiology, history and social ethics. From an ecclesiological standpoint, the twentieth century historical dynamic from the prevailing ecclesiology of the "Mystical Body of Christ"<sup>24</sup> to one of "communion" (or '*communio*')<sup>25</sup> serves as the theological context for how the Catholic Worker and Focolare contribute to and reflect a Catholic understanding of Christ's Church. From the standpoint of history, the chronological range of this paper will generally be confined to that of the twentieth century and somewhat into the twenty-first. Peter Maurin lived from 1877 to 1949, and Dorothy Day lived from 1897 to 1980. Chiara Lubich, who is still alive, was born in 1920. While it would be shortsighted to equate each movement with each founder alone, this project focuses on the example of lay leadership and the concepts developed by those particular founders in shaping each movement.

Catholic social ethics, particularly from a historical-critical perspective, also plays an important role in this study.<sup>26</sup> Focolare's social ethics take their cue

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researcher at the University of Queensland in Australia, humorously but accurately quotes Gerhard Eberling's *Introduction to a Theological Theory of Language* [(Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973), 206], who states, "In general one could only wish that theologians were better masters of their craft, instead of hankering after things that seem more interesting to them, with the consequence that they have a dilettante knowledge of everything, including theology."

<sup>24</sup> Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi* (June 29, 1943), Vatican [website]; available from [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/encyclicals/documents~](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents~); accessed August 1, 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Some Aspects of the Church Understood as a Communion," *Origins* 22 (1992).

<sup>26</sup> O'Collins and Farrugia, 80, 245. The term "Catholic social ethics" is closely related to "Catholic social teaching," which concerns "the rights and obligations of different members of society in their relationship to the common good." "Ethics" as such is defined as that which "studies moral principles to clarify what is right and wrong, or what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing." John M. Grodelski, "Social Ethics In The Young Karol Wojtyla: A Study-In-

from the pastoral teaching of the hierarchy and from their ongoing discernment of the charism of unity. The Catholic Worker serves as the primary agent of the American Catholic radicalist social ethics tradition.<sup>27</sup> This 'counter-tradition' (juxtaposed to the more dominant liberal, or Americanist, Catholic social ethics tradition) offers a model of prophetic witness that integrates faith and everyday life as a means of affecting revolutionary social change, transforming today's secularized culture.<sup>28</sup>

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Progress," *Faith and Reason* (Spring/Summer 1996), Catholic Cculture [website]; available from [www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc\\_view~](http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc_view~). Grodelski has translated early graduate school notebooks of research done by the young Karol Wojtyla. The notes reveal a great deal about how the future John Paul II's views on social ethics were formed. Grodelski writes, "Thus, alongside a discussion of 'divine revelation as the source of Catholic social ethics' Wojtyla argues for the role of natural law's universality and immutability. He sums up his first chapter by defending the thesis that the 'primary task of Catholic social ethics is the introduction of the principles of justice and love into social life.' Grodelski is Associate Dean at Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology, Seton Hall University, in South Orange, New York.

<sup>27</sup> The scope of this study precludes inclusion of a thorough analysis of both American Catholic social ethics traditions. However, the work of Michael Baxter, CSC (University of Notre Dame), and Eugene McCarraher (Villanova University) are the resources used most for understanding and applying these 'traditions' (see bibliography). Michael J. Baxter, "Blowing the dynamite of the Church": Catholic Radicalism from a Catholic Radicalist Perspective," in *Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays*, ed. Phillip M. Runkel and Susan Mountin William J. Thorn (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001); Michael J. Baxter, "Notes on Catholic Americanism and Catholic Radicalism: Toward a Counter-Tradition of Catholic Social Ethics," in *American Catholic Traditions: Resources for Renewal*, ed. Sandra Yocum Mize and William Portier, Catholic Theology Society (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996); Eugene McCarraher, *Christian Critics: Religion and the Impasse in Modern American Social Thought* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

<sup>28</sup> Kristin E. Heyer, "Bridging the Divide in Contemporary U.S. Catholic Social Ethics," *Theological Studies* (June 1, 2005), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library~](http://www.highbeam.com/library~). Heyer points out the complexities between the competing traditions of American Catholic social ethics by comparing the Americanist school of Bryan Hehir and the Radicalist school of Michael Baxter and the Catholic Worker. While this thesis supports the integration of faith and culture, a careful and difficult balancing act between participation in the culture to evangelize it and accommodation to an overly secularized culture must be sought. Heyer shows how each school of American Catholic social ethics seeks this balance, as well as one that respects individual freedoms along with social responsibilities. Neither of these 'traditions' can be characterized as "extremist," but reaching a truly workable and faithful balance

The following chapter will focus on the ecclesiological and historical development of the vocation of the laity, especially in relation to communion ecclesiology and since the development of Catholic Action in the early twentieth century. The chapter will then examine how both Focolare and the Catholic Worker have participated in that process, particularly through their formative years, leading up to Vatican II. How the development of the lay apostolate and how lay movements have both exemplified and helped shape the understanding of the Church as communion will also be surveyed.

The second chapter will examine the nature of communitarianism and personalism, respectively, and how Focolare and the Catholic Worker have demonstrated an integration of these concepts, and how that integration further demonstrates and models the lived expression of the Church as communion. The third and final chapter will show how each movement's intentional integration of the Catholic faith and the secular life (or "temporal affairs") of the laity provides a model of evangelization and social witness in the contemporary western world, where materialism and secularization are identified as prevalent principles that hinder the mission of the Church.

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of all of these considerations requires due acknowledgment of both sides of the debate, without sectarian chauvinism or ideological partisanship. Kristin E. Heyer is currently assistant professor of theological studies at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, and author of a chapter on Catholic social ethics in the book *Toward an Evangelical Public Policy* (Baker Books, 2005) and *Prophetic and Public: The Social Witness of U.S. Catholicism* (Georgetown University Press, 2006).

Regarding the thesis' scope, this work cannot present the comprehensive histories or an exhaustive analysis of either the Catholic Worker or of Focolare. In particular, some of the major aspects of the Catholic Worker that will be mentioned but not surveyed in detail will be its witness of peace and nonviolence. On Focolare, very little analysis will be devoted here to its work in the area of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue. The research literature on the Catholic Worker and Focolare deals plentifully – perhaps even predominantly – with pacifism and ecumenism, respectively, and so this thesis will seek to deal with aspects of each movement, specifically as they apply to the lay apostolate in the Catholic Church.

## CHAPTER I

### Lay Ecclesial Identity and the Lay Apostolate – Theological Principles and the Historical Origins of Focolare and the Catholic Worker

The Catholic Worker and Focolare are two of the most paradigmatic Catholic movements of the twentieth century, each for their own demographic and geographic spheres of influence. In the United States, the Catholic Worker served among the working class, the poor and among young Catholic intellectuals. Focolare has typically energized segments of each generation's youth, but also families, priests, religious and those who follow religions and Christian denominations other than Catholicism. Focolare has historically exercised more influence in the European communities, but they have grown to include a truly global following. While striking similar profiles in silhouette, upon closer examination, these two movements are found to bear very different collective features and personalities. Yet, each offers its own unique model for contemporary lay Catholic discipleship.

The focus for this chapter is lay ecclesial identity and the role that the laity is called to play in the lay apostolate. Integrated with a more general analysis of the lay apostolate are the contributions of both Focolare and the Catholic Worker. All of these factors will be contextualized by how they demonstrate communion ecclesiology.

### Ecclesial Identity and Communion

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church's official teaching authority, the Magisterium, has attempted to frame reference to the "laity" or "lay faithful" in positive terms, as baptized disciples and participants in Christ's mission.<sup>29</sup> This development signals a departure from pre-Vatican II theology, which generally emphasized the laity as simply those who are not ordained. Today, the laity are viewed as those members of the Church, whose vocation and mission are to animate the gospel of Jesus in the temporal affairs of the world.<sup>30</sup> The post-synodal exhortation, *Christifideles Laici* (1988), states that the laity are active members in the "mission of salvation."<sup>31</sup> The *Lineamenta* (see note) for the 1987 Synod on the laity suggests the possibility of a "fourth option: to enter into a 'lay

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<sup>29</sup> CL #9.

<sup>30</sup> AA #2, #29.

<sup>31</sup> CL #3.

vocation”<sup>32</sup> that would be distinct from the other three traditionally defined ecclesial vocations to the priesthood, religious life and marriage. However, the document states that “vocation” is “broader than mission, because it is composed of both a call to *communio* [which endures] and a call to mission [which results from *communio* and “is limited to an earthly existence”].”<sup>33</sup> Opus Dei priest, Robert Connor, states that not only is ‘laity’ a positive ecclesial identity, but it constitutes the “organic convergence” (as opposed to “functions of power”) of the whole Church, all of whom share in “Christ’s priesthood,” but in “specific,” or, distinct ways. Lest one be led to believe that ‘power’ is a point of contention, Connor calls the clergy “subjects” who serve the “common mission of evangelization.”<sup>34</sup>

In the 1983 Code of Canon Law, Canons 207 and 225 serve as the “theological underpinnings for the other canons concerning [the laity].”<sup>35</sup> Canon 207 deals with “categories of Christian faith,” which addresses the fundamental issues of ecclesial identity, while Canon 225 addresses the issues of the “laity in

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<sup>32</sup> Kenan B. Osbourne, *Ministry: Lay Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993), 597-598, quoting *Lineamenta* #15. The *Lineamenta* is a planning document, which gives guidelines for consideration. It is not an authoritative text.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., quoting *Lineamenta* #15.

<sup>34</sup> Robert A. Connor, “Why Laity Are Not Ministers: A Metaphysical Probe,” *Communio* 27 (Summer 2002), 266.

<sup>35</sup> Aurelie A. Hagstrom, *The Concepts of the Vocation and the Mission of the Laity* (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1994), 93. Aurelie Hagstrom is department chair of theology at the University of St. Francis (Illinois).

the mission of the Church."<sup>36</sup> In essence, the 1983 revision reflects Vatican II's "People of God" ecclesiology, as opposed to the 1917 version, which viewed the Church as the "perfect society."<sup>37</sup> Aurelie Hagstrom states, "[The Second Vatican Council] chose this image [People of God] precisely because it bridges the gap between the theological and sociological aspects of the Church which form one reality."<sup>38</sup> This implementation of the "People of God" image has implied that there is an equality of all members of the Body of Christ, though this equality exists within a hierarchical structure. Since the Council, "People of God" has not been the preferred image of common discipleship, whereas the Church as communion is the preferred ecclesiology.<sup>39</sup> While these two ecclesiologies may only represent slight differences (mostly of emphasis) and are in no way mutually exclusive, one important affirmation of intentionally applying the People of God is the consideration given to both the concrete social reality, as well as the more theoretical (or poetical) theological reality. This underscores the integral relationship of these temporal and sacred 'realities.' Both images of the Church as the Body of Christ and as the People of God contribute to the understanding of ecclesial communion and highlight the sacramental nature of the Church as

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 95, 97, quoting *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges* #75 (1983), the papal document, which promulgated the 1983 CIC.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>39</sup> Osbourne, 533; Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 1, 72-73, 106-107.

the embodiment of Christ's presence through the gathering of disciples, or as Chiara Lubich has termed it, "Jesus in the midst."<sup>40</sup>

The 1983 canonical revision also affirms the "hierarchical authority as service."<sup>41</sup> Hagstrom lists the "four basic elements," or criteria, by which the canon law revision committee was to define the ecclesial identity of the laity, clergy and religious in Canon 207. The four criteria are as follows: 1) defining the *christifideles* (all Christ's faithful) as having equal dignity but a hierarchy of function; 2) determining all of the faithful's "conditions" by "sacramental identity;" 3) asserting the "divine institution of sacred ministry" (understood strictly as ordination); and 4) defining the "function" of each order based on a "variety of roles."<sup>42</sup> The primary task of the clergy is the "service to Church *communio*,"<sup>43</sup> just as Connor noted their call to service to the Church's mission.

In order to gain a unified vision for the communion of roles in the Church, ecumenical sources are also helpful. By virtue of the holiness to which all are called, the Church becomes, in the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, a "priest of nations," a radical and inclusive "witness."<sup>44</sup> This is the proper starting point for describing the ecclesial identity of the *laos*, which is

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<sup>40</sup> The theme of Jesus in the midst derives from Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

<sup>41</sup> Hagstrom, 95, 97, quoting *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges* #75 (1983).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 108-110.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 141, 143.

<sup>44</sup> Rowan Williams, "Being a People: Reflections on the Concept of the 'Laity'," *Religion, State and Society* 27, no. 1 (November 1, 1999), Religious and Philosophy Collection [database on-line]; available from EBSCOhost, 11-12; LG #9-10 affirms this principle.

really an inclusive root word for the whole People of God. By Christ's action of redeeming and restoring humanity through his life, death and resurrection, the Church witnesses to its own new life by advocating for the poor and the oppressed for the sake of unity, thus affirming the dignity of the lowly. This newly unified state emanates from the communion of the Trinitarian God, from self-giving love, as embodied in Christ's self-sacrifice.<sup>45</sup> Rev. Dr. Charles Miller cites J. M. R. Tillard's argument that the "priesthood of the Church," or "existential" priesthood of the baptized, consists of "spiritual sacrifices," "ministry" as service to others, and "witness."<sup>46</sup> This consciousness of the laity as participating in a common, existential priesthood challenges lay Catholics to view their lives as mediation between God and the everyday world of temporal affairs. While Catholics may sing hymns in Church about how 'Christ has no hands on earth but your hands' (St. Theresa of Avila), the image of a "cultic" (ordained) priesthood,<sup>47</sup> rather than a priesthood of the baptized, still prevails over the

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<sup>45</sup> Williams, 12. Cites William Stringfellow as origin of "advocacy" as "praise." Stringfellow sought to promote the notion of the Church as 'nation' to counteract secular nationalism.

<sup>46</sup> Charles Miller, "The Theology of the Laity: Description and Construction with Reference to the American Book of Common Prayer," *Anglican Theological Review* 84, no. 2 (Spring 2002), Religion and Philosophy Collection [database on-line]; available from EBSCOhost, 225-228. Miller lists the following scriptures in forming his argument regarding the component aspects of "priestliness": 1) "spiritual sacrifices" = 1 Pt. 2:5, Heb. 13:15, Rom. 12:1, 2) "ministry" = Phil. 2:5, 30, 2 Cor. 9:12 (these references seem to reflect liturgical ministry), and 3) "witness" = 1 Pt. 2:9, Rom. 15:16. Charles Miller is Rector of the Church of the Transfiguration (Episcopal Church USA), New York City.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Catholic imagination. As a result, the full richness of what is entailed in the secular character of the lay vocation is not actualized in day-to-day life.

The *tria munera* of Christ (the 'three offices' of priest, prophet and king') constitute the ecclesial nature of the common priesthood,<sup>48</sup> into which one enters through the Sacraments of Initiation. However, Canon 204 defines "common discipleship" as a) "the baptized," b) the "people of God," c) "called to ... mission," d) the *tria munera*, and e) "in accord with the condition of each one."<sup>49</sup> This is the "undivided community" of the Church. Letter "e" above makes it necessary for differentiation to exist amidst the equality of common discipleship. John Henry Newman ascribed the laity's share in the *tria munera* to a paradox, except, notably, the role of "prophet."<sup>50</sup> In other words, they share in the common priesthood without ordination, and they share in Christ's kingship without royal power. Newman analogized the royal office with human work and the beatitude, "blessed are the meek ... they shall possess the land."<sup>51</sup> While acknowledging the dignity and nobility of the laity, which is notably extraordinary for his era, Newman makes a case for the essential distinction that the laity's share in Christ's *munera* is different from that of the clergy. This distinction leads one to recognize the important role played by prophetic social teaching as a key

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<sup>48</sup> AA #2; LG #10.

<sup>49</sup> Osbourne, 533-534, 537, 598-599.

<sup>50</sup> Jean Guilton, *The Church and the Laity: From Newman to Vatican II* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1965), 39-40.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

element in the lay apostolate, especially a witness that gives special place of the needs of the poor and oppressed. For this reason, Catholic social ethics and the type of prophetic witness exemplified by both the Catholic Worker and Focolare contributes greatly to understanding why even the simplest forms of social service have spiritual and missionary significance. Without an intentional integration of one's faith with one's everyday life, a complete understanding of the disciple's and the whole Church's vocation and mission cannot be attained.

In order to understand the witness of Focolare and the Catholic Worker and how each movement offers a model of lay discipleship, it is essential to survey each movement's origins, so that their beliefs and practices can be contextualized. The character of both movements is influenced greatly by the eras in which they were founded. Focolare's origins, rooted in the passionate mysticism of Italian Catholicism and the tribulations of World War II, largely shaped how Chiara Lubich interpreted her vocation to share her charism of unity with the members of her movement. The Catholic Worker's birth in the midst of the Great Depression in America and by springing out of the diverse backgrounds of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin also shaped their discernment for transforming society to peace, justice and holiness. Once each movement's lay ecclesial identity is established, then that sense of lay vocation and self-understanding will be contextualized in the whole framework of ecclesial

communion. Each movement's particular relationship with the hierarchy of the Church will help reveal how each movement fits into the communion of diverse roles within the Church.

### Focolare's Vocation to Love and Unity

Focolare members wear a trademark, ever-present smile,<sup>52</sup> which is born out of the shared experience of Chiara Lubich and her "first companions"<sup>53</sup> brave endurance of the bombing of their native Trent, Italy, during World War II.<sup>54</sup> Lubich's followers are trained to strike a posture of serious contemplation when listening to someone speak to them, which is what they call "making ourselves one" with others.<sup>55</sup> They seek to live the witness of simplicity and the "charism of

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<sup>52</sup> Gordon Urquhart, *The Pope's Armada: Unlocking the Secrets of Mysterious and Powerful New Sects in the Church*, 1st US ed. (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1999), 26. A critic and former-member in the young adult leadership of Focolare, Gordon Urquhart, reports that "fixed grins" are like a "uniform" for *focolarini*. Also, the "accepted posture for 'making unity,'" which is an intentional technique for active listening and self-giving to others, according to Urquhart, is to "perch at the edge of one's seat, leaning forward with [one's] arms folded or propped under the chin." On the cover photograph of Gallagher's biography of Lubich and the movement, this "posture" is evident as the picture shows bleachers full of teenagers surrounding Chiara Lubich.

<sup>53</sup> Jim Gallagher, *A Woman's Work: Chiara Lubich* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997), 24.

<sup>54</sup> Donald Mitchell, "A Life Between Two Fires: Chiara Lubich and Lay Sanctity," in *Lay Sanctity, Medieval and Modern: A Search for Models*, ed. Ann Astell (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 174-175; Elisabeth Dodds, "The Focolari: A Catholic Witness," *The Christian Century* 86, no. 2 (July 2, 1969), 910. Elisabeth Dodds quotes her 'skeptical' teenage son, who says, "you have to admit, you never meet a grouchy Focolare [sic]." Mitchell is a professor of philosophy and religious studies at Purdue University.

<sup>55</sup> Urquhart, 26; Chiara Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, Spiritual Writings, vol. 2 (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991), 140. Focolare's term for expressing communion or the activity of fostering communion is "making ourselves one," which, following the example of St. Vincent de Paul, who coined the term, essentially expresses self-emptying "charity."

unity" as Chiara Lubich has received it.<sup>56</sup> In the bomb shelters, Lubich and her friends reflected upon John 17:11, "Father, may they all be one," and discerned the call to fulfill it with their own lives.<sup>57</sup>

"Focolare" in Italian means "fireside" or "hearth fire,"<sup>58</sup> though Focolare's official name is the "Work of Mary."<sup>59</sup> Using this imagery of 'fire,' the movement seeks to balance a spirituality of "two fires," one's "inner fire" and the "communal fire" of the movement itself.<sup>60</sup> The spiritual symbolism of a hearth fire also evokes the idea of gathering around the Holy Spirit, illustrating the basic tenets of familial unity and the movement's charismatic origins. Focolare is officially an "ecclesial movement in the Catholic Church,"<sup>61</sup> meaning that their statutes have been approved, first by Pope John XXIII in 1962, and then by the Pontifical Council for

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<sup>56</sup> Urquhart, 26.

<sup>57</sup> Judith M. Povilus, *United in His Name: Jesus in the Our Midst in the Experience and Thought of Chiara Lubich*, Preface by Bishop Robert Morneau (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1992), 15. An important note regarding various quotes of Lubich where a particular source is not specified: Judith Povilus explicitly addresses the difficulty for authors writing about Lubich to be specific when quoting her. Focolare editors compile other "published writings, unedited writings, and recorded conversations and talks" to form most of the material, which is published under Lubich's authorship in English. Povilus in particular admits the "novelty" of primarily writing her book with the use of sound recordings of Lubich whose dates and to whom they are addressed is difficult. Therefore, any citations that simply state, "quoting Lubich," indicate that a specific citation or source was not given by the author.

<sup>58</sup> Mitchell, 174; Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 24. The gender conjugation of the word *Focolare* reveals the terminology for members. A male member is a *focolarino*; a female member is a *focolarina*; the collective plural is *focolarini*; while a plurality of female members is *focolarine*.

<sup>59</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 16.

<sup>60</sup> Mitchell, 174.

<sup>61</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 7.

the Laity in 1990.<sup>62</sup> The statutes of the Work of Mary are often referred to simply as the movement's "Rule."<sup>63</sup> In addition to the traumatic life in Europe in World War II, the founding of Focolare also occurred in the context of Pius XII's encyclical, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, which inspired Lubich to anchor Focolare spirituality on the "gospel as it has always been," namely, as articulated in the Holy Scriptures.<sup>64</sup>

Chiara Lubich is described in the Introduction to her book, *When Our Love is Charity*, as "a prominent figure in ecumenism and in the growing dialogue between the world's great religions."<sup>65</sup> While this description may cover how most people know Chiara Lubich outside of Focolare, it does not do justice to the significant role she plays in the lives of all Focolare members as their charismatic leader, which is analogous to the reverence Franciscans hold for St. Francis. The night before her secret consecration "to 'marry God'" on December 7, 1943, Lubich discerned before her crucifix that her charism was to follow the Christ of

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 16. The statutes were revised to reflect the teachings of Vatican II on ecclesial movements and the lay apostolate, which helped inform the 1983 revision of canon law.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.; Enzo Fondi, "The Experience of Formation in the Focolare Movement: A Significant, Profoundly Communitarian Approach Flourishing in the Church Today," in *Priests of the Future: Formation and Communion*, ed. Michael Mulvey (NYC: New City Press, 1991), 46; J. Francis Cardinal Stafford, "Ecclesial Movements in the Universal Church" [Televised Program]; aired March 13, 2003; Interviewed by Fr. C. Frank McCloskey (Eternal Word Television Network, 2003). Fr. C. John McCloskey of the Catholic Information Center interviewed Stafford for EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network) specifically on the topic of lay ecclesial movements. Fr. Enzo Fondi leads Focolare's extensive efforts at inter-religious dialogue.

<sup>64</sup> Chiara Lubich, "For a Philosophy that Stems from Christ," *Communio* 25 (Winter 1998), 747. Lubich refers to Pius XII's encyclical as "a profound rediscovery of the Word of God." Lubich has also referred to the "entire gospel" as the real (or ultimate) "rule" of the movement.

<sup>65</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 7.

"spiritual sufferings," as opposed to the physical wounds of popular and traditionalist devotion, exemplified by stigmatics, like Padre Pio.<sup>66</sup> This new devotion would be termed "Jesus Forsaken."<sup>67</sup>

The comparison to St. Pio of Pietrelcina (1887 – 1968) is not trivial, because it speaks not only to the Italian roots of Focolare's spirituality; it also highlights what is modern and innovative about her charism. St. Pio's fame was contemporary to the beginnings of Focolare, and the historical circumstances at that time marked a significant shift in Italian Catholicism. In one important respect, Italian Catholicism bears a long tradition of emphasizing suffering, with the wounds of the crucified Christ as the focal point, dating back to St. Francis in 1224. The "enigma of the stigmata" afflicted a recorded 321 persons, 280 being female (over 87%) and the majority were Italian.<sup>68</sup> Lubich explicitly embraces a spirituality of suffering, stating in verse, "[Jesus Forsaken] is universal suffering, and therefore mine ... I will go through the world seeking it in every instant of my life."<sup>69</sup> At the same time, Lubich's less literal embrace of the suffering Christ

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<sup>66</sup> Gallagher, 15-18.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> G. Louis Nicoletti, "Padre Pio and Jiddu Krishnamurti," *Journal of Religion and Psychological Research* 16, no. 3 (July 1993), Religion and Philosophy Collection [database on-line]; available from EBSCOhost, 154. *The Enigma of the Stigmata* is the title of Rene Bloit's study of the stigmata cited by Nicoletti for figures. Nicoletti teaches at La Salle College, Pennsylvania and is listed in the "Who's Who In Religion."

<sup>69</sup> Chiara Lubich, *The Cry of Jesus Crucified and Forsaken* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2000), 60.

("spiritual sufferings") and her lay status in the 'world' (and not in a monastery) makes her spirituality more accessible, though no less passionate (see note).<sup>70</sup>

Sociologist Luca Diotallevi makes the case for a correlation between the "religious monopoly" of Catholicism in Italy and "religious market theory" (composed largely of church attendance and the success of recruiting new clergy) to explain the relative vitality of Italian Catholicism, as compared to other "large Western countries" (second only to the United States) in an era of widespread secularization and free market commodification of religion.<sup>71</sup> Diotallevi explains that the industrialization of northern Italy in the early-to-mid twentieth century and the lack of similar development in southern Italy greatly divided the spiritual landscape of Italy.<sup>72</sup> Lubich hails from Trent in the northeast, whereas St. Pio lived in a Capuchin monastery in the southern province of Puglia. Yet, this is not to minimize the religiosity of Lubich's spirituality. Just the contrary, "'modern' forms of religion ... may also be found, at least in Italy, within the ecclesiastical world, and not only outside them or in opposition to

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<sup>70</sup> Nicoletti, 155. Nicoletti reports that Padre Pio's body temperature was recorded to spike to "125 degrees Fahrenheit." This physical condition contrasts to what Donald Mitchell refers to as the "inner fire" of embracing Lubich's spirituality, which is figurative, that is, not measured with 'horse thermometers,' which is how St. Pio's doctors measured his temperature for greater accuracy.

<sup>71</sup> Luca Diotallevi, "Internal competition in a national religious monopoly: the Catholic effect and the Italian case," *Sociology of Religion* 63, no. 2 (June 22, 2002), Religion and Philosophy Collection [database on-line]; available from EBSCOhost, 137-138. Diotallevi complains that Italian sociologists have generally failed to recognize the connection for which he is arguing, rendering the "Italian case enigmatic." (139)

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 139. Diotallevi states, "The northern regions are among the most advanced in western countries; the southern are among the least developed, most conformist and most traditionalist in Western Europe."

them.”<sup>73</sup> A significant innovation for a Catholic movement was Lubich’s early and copious incorporation of the Bible in her writings, again, making the movement accessible and less ecclesiastically mediated.<sup>74</sup>

Lubich does not claim to be a theologian herself, only “one who bears a spirituality that many have confirmed to contain a charism.”<sup>75</sup> Lay movements are certainly not new in the history of the Catholic Church; yet, Focolare, which is unique in and of itself, still belongs to a new class of movements, *ecclesial* movements, which are freely associating (that is, autonomous) but ecclesiastically approved for a specific purpose in the apostolic mission of the Church.<sup>76</sup> According to J. Francis Cardinal Stafford, movements like Communion and Liberation and the Neo-Catechumenal Way, which have the same ‘ecclesial’ or juridical status as Focolare and with whom Focolare is often compared, arose out of the social unrest in Europe in the late 1960s, as well as out of the Second

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 140-141.

<sup>74</sup> Dodds, 910. Dodds specifically noted in 1969 the “parallels with Protestants” evident in Focolare practice, including the use of “testimonial,” the “life-changing power of faith,” being “Bible-centered,” and use of the “songfest” as worship.

<sup>75</sup> Povilus, 11.

<sup>76</sup> *The Code of Canon Law in English Translation*, (1983), The Canon Law Society Trust [website]; available from [www.deacons.net/Canon\\_Law\\_Index.htm](http://www.deacons.net/Canon_Law_Index.htm); accessed 2003-2005, 321-326. These canons (#321-326) govern what defines a “private association.” The canons stress the autonomy of these associations, but they also stress the need for ecclesiastical oversight. Also, the canons call for mutual respect, the associations for ecclesiastical authority, and for the ecclesiastical authorities to respect the autonomy of the association.

Vatican Council, just as the Catholic Worker arose out of the Depression in America, and as Focolare in Italy arose out of the ashes of World War II.<sup>77</sup>

Within a year of Focolare's founding, which is marked by Lubich's consecration, literally hundreds of followers from all strata of Italian society joined her.<sup>78</sup> One critic of the movement, an unnamed German bishop, reportedly equated Focolare's explosive beginning to "air-raid shelter piety."<sup>79</sup> This accusation suggested that Lubich's devotion to "Jesus Forsaken" reflected the immediate angst of a war-ravaged country, as if they suddenly found religion while suffering and facing death in the bomb shelters. Indeed, Focolare lore is full of stories related to Lubich's discovery of "God-Love" in the midst of Allied, then German, bombing of Trent, as described above. Of these discoveries, Fr. Enzo Fondi, states, "It was a new faith in the love of God, a living and intense faith that transforms life."<sup>80</sup> Given both perspectives of the German bishop and of Fr. Fondi, it becomes apparent that both men are correct regarding their reaction to the circumstances of their times and in how extraordinary situations can lead to profound and genuine spiritual insights, even innovation.

Complementing Diotallevi's sociological analysis noted above, Robert Ventresca surveys the "clash between two competing visions of Italian society"

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<sup>77</sup> Stafford, "Ecclesial Movements" [Televised Interview]. Similar to Focolare, Schöenstatt in Germany was founded in the aftermath of World War I. Cardinal Stafford is the former President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity in the Vatican and former Archbishop of Denver.

<sup>78</sup> Mitchell, 177.

<sup>79</sup> Fondi, 47.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 47.

during the first parliamentary elections in Italy after World War II in April 1948. The election pitted Christian democrats and the Church against the Popular Front, a coalition of communists and socialists.<sup>81</sup> The Catholic Church, led by Pope Pius XII, embarked on an "inventive campaign" to halt the spread of communism in Italy, and "employed its capillary network of parishes and lay organizations and experimented with new forms of mass-mobilization to defend Catholicism."<sup>82</sup> Focolare notably gained diocesan approval in 1947,<sup>83</sup> a specific timeframe that also saw a "wave of Marian apparitions ... spread across Italy."<sup>84</sup> Focolare is the "Work of Mary" (*L'opera di Maria*). Lubich does claim to have had mystical experiences in 1949, which she refers to as a "luminous period."<sup>85</sup>

Focolare actively opposed communism throughout the Cold War, establishing an evangelizing presence in eastern European countries. Participating the late 1960's counter-revolutionary response to radical, often anti-religious student demonstrations throughout Europe, Focolare youth, or "Gen," fanatically waved "little yellow books," a clear reference to Mao's Little Red Book, as Lubich gave speeches, wearing the martial fashion Cultural Revolution

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<sup>81</sup> Robert A. Ventresca, "The Virgin and the Bear: Religion, Society and the Cold War in Italy," *Journal of Social History* (Dec. 22, 2003), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library~](http://www.highbeam.com/library~). Ventresca teaches social history at King's College, University of Western Ontario in London, ON.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Povilus, 128, note #1.

<sup>84</sup> Ventresca, "The Virgin and the Bear."

<sup>85</sup> Lubich, *The Cry*, 60.

Maoists.<sup>86</sup> Notably, yellow refers to prayer and spiritual life in Focolare's color spectrum (see note),<sup>87</sup> conveying what they perceived to be a need for a religious re-awakening amidst the rise of radical secularism. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Focolare mounted a concerted effort to spread the movement into Communist Eastern Europe, and despite being "closely monitored" by authorities, they received a tremendous response from Catholics living under repressive regimes with covert support from local bishops.<sup>88</sup>

As alluded to above, Lubich and a group of her 'first companions' retreated to the Dolomite Mountains of Italy in 1949 to further discern the "graces" and "doctrine" of the charism of unity that Lubich had received and was now sharing with so many people.<sup>89</sup> Among her companions (the only man mentioned in relation to this sabbatical) was Igino Giordani, a "highly renowned politician, journalist and scholar" (see note for additional biographical

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<sup>86</sup> Urquhart, 19.

<sup>87</sup> Fondi, 50-51. The color scheme is as follows: 1) red represents the communal sharing of all material belongings, or 'communion of goods,' as well as collective work and service; 2) orange is "witness and evangelization;" 3) yellow is "spirituality and prayer life;" 4) green is "nature and physical life;" 5) blue is "harmony and balance;" 6) indigo is "wisdom and studies;" and finally 7) violet is "unity and means of communication."

<sup>88</sup> Gallagher, 113-114, 117. Among their activities, the movement established a clinic in Leipzig, and they successfully held a scaled down version of a typical Focolare gathering, a "Mariopolis," in Czechoslovakia.

<sup>89</sup> "Editorial Preface" to *An Introduction to the Abba School: Conversations from the Focolare's Interdisciplinary Study Center*, Introduction by David L. Schindler (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2002), 17; Gerard Rosse, "The Charism of Unity in the Light of the Mystical Experience of Chiara Lubich," in *An Introduction to the Abba School: Conversations from the Focolare's Interdisciplinary Study Center* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2002), 56.

information).<sup>90</sup> Lubich considers Giordani, whose *focolarino* name is "Foco" (literally, "Fire"),<sup>91</sup> a "co-founder" of the movement,<sup>92</sup> whose vital role in Focolare was born on this mountain retreat in 1949. At that time in his life, Giordani had been seeking "a virgin to follow," a notion which sprang from his devotion to Catherine of Siena.<sup>93</sup> According to Lubich, Giordani asked to make a "vow of obedience" to her as a means of following God's will.<sup>94</sup> Giordani's informal 'consecration' took place when Lubich received the Eucharist one day, and in prayer, she made what she called a "pact of unity with Jesus in the Eucharist and in Foco's heart."<sup>95</sup> In this act, Lubich felt herself completely unified with Jesus to the extent that Lubich declared, "I found myself in the bosom of the Father."<sup>96</sup> In these pinnacle, mystical moments for Lubich (of which there are several written

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<sup>90</sup> Editorial Preface, 17; "Process of Beatification Under Way for Focolare Co-Founder; Igino Giordani a Key Political Figure in Postwar Italy," ZENIT - The World Seen from Rome (Zenit.org) [Website]. Innovative Media, Inc., June 6, 2004; available from <http://www.zenit.org/english~>; accessed December 7, 2005. "Igino Giordani (1894-1980) was a husband, father, ecumenist, writer, journalist and politician. His cause of beatification was promoted in December 2000 at the initiative of then Bishop Pietro Garlato of Tivoli, Giordani's birthplace, and Bishop Giuseppe Materresse of Frascati, the diocese where the Servant of God died." Giordani published *Fides*, the journal of the "pontifical society for the Propagation of the Faith," and he was an elected deputy to the Italian parliament and the Council of Europe.

<sup>91</sup> Rosse, 56.

<sup>92</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 60; Lubich, *The Cry*, 60.

<sup>93</sup> Rosse, 56, quoting Lubich; Povilus, 11.

<sup>94</sup> Rosse, 56-57, quoting Lubich. The exact quote is, "he approached me one day proposing to make a vow of obedience to me. By doing so, he thought he would be obeying God."

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 57, quoting Lubich.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

about), she gained additional insight or "intuition" into the significance of how she believed herself called to share this gift, or charismatic calling, with others.<sup>97</sup>

Highlighting the 'suffering' nature of her spirituality, Lubich reports that her new insights "made us think life would always be ... heaven and light. But what followed instead was the reality of everyday life."<sup>98</sup> Lubich reflects on the paradox of feeling so intimately joined to God and yet also realizing that in joining oneself to Christ, that covenant of love is the very absence of self-emptying love. This emptiness as ultimate fulfillment is interchangeably understood as "God-Love" and "Jesus Forsaken."<sup>99</sup>

In the context of post-war Italian politics and Italy's relative religious vitality, Giordani's association of Lubich with Catherine of Siena also sheds some light on how Lubich's spirituality reflects her origins in the mystically suffering ethos of Italian Catholicism. Explaining the closeness of the crucified Christ (Jesus Forsaken) to his heavenly Father, ironically, at his most human moment of mortality, Lubich cites Catherine of Siena's vision of the crucified Christ upon experiencing a "grave temptation." In this vision, Jesus reportedly said to St. Catherine,

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<sup>97</sup> Lubich, *The Cry*, 60. Lubich refers to the era that followed this 1949 retreat, "A Luminous Period."

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 25. Lubich writes, "A leap of new joy in the ever new God-Love. A cry of infinite pain in the humanity of Christ, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34).'"

'My daughter Catherine, do you see how much I suffered for you? So do not be sorry to suffer for me.' But she said, 'My Lord, where were you when my heart was troubled with such temptations?' And the Lord, 'I was in your heart.'<sup>100</sup>

Giordani's search for 'a virgin to follow' as a devoutly Catholic member of the Italian parliament in the late 1940s, again, fits in perfectly with Ventresca's historical survey of the overtly religious environment surrounding the 1948 Italian elections. St. Catherine herself was famously involved in the politics of her day, which were of course inseparable from Catholicism, especially her influence over the papal return to Rome from Avignon.<sup>101</sup> Referring to the "wave of Marian apparitions" that occurred in conjunction with the "popular piety" of the 1948 elections, Ventresca states,

The 1948 apparitions reflected an individual and collective search for meaning, order and protection on the part of ordinary Italians who worried about the implications for the faith and for the country of a Communist win at the ballot box. This was evidence of the extent to which the cult of the Virgin Mary had moved from fighting secularization, to fighting the spread of Soviet Communism.<sup>102</sup>

The interconnection between the political and ideological environment of post-war Italy and the rise of Focolare as a modern successor to the Italian tradition of mysticism is another indication of Focolare's exemplification of integrating the secular context of the laity with a profoundly conscious devotion to traditional

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 58, note 3, quoting G. Jorgensen, *Santa Caterina da Siena* (Turin, 1941), 49.

<sup>101</sup> Benedict M. Ashley, ed., "Translation of the Article 'The Friars Preachers' from the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* [Editions Beauchesne]: II. In Italy, Part A," Dominican Central Province [Website]; available from [www.op.org/domcentral/study/ashley](http://www.op.org/domcentral/study/ashley); accessed July 26, 2006.

<sup>102</sup> Ventresca, "The Virgin and the Bear."

Catholicism. Also, as Ventresca indicates above, this integration "reflected an individual and collective search for meaning," further reinforcing this paper's examination of Focolare as a model of lay discipleship, which balances the personal and communitarian dimensions of life and faith.

Despite the initial design of Focolare as a strictly *lay* movement, Lubich recruited a *focolarino*, whom she had personally encouraged to seek ordination and join her in the movement's leadership.<sup>103</sup> This man, Pasquale Forese, became the "first *focolarino* priest" in 1954 and is considered a "co-founder,"<sup>104</sup> along with Lubich and Giordani, who was the "first married *focolarino*."<sup>105</sup> While affirming the authoritarian role of the priesthood, Focolare stresses the "communitarian and ecclesial" nature of the ordained priesthood, stating that priests are "profoundly united to the laity."<sup>106</sup> Further, Fr. Enrico Pepe, a Focolare priest, promotes an increase in integration between priests and laity, citing the Vatican II document on training priests, *Optatam Totius*, which urges the clergy to engage in "dialogue and mission" in the world.<sup>107</sup> From these

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<sup>103</sup> Gallagher, 68-69; Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 60.

<sup>104</sup> Gallagher, 68-69; Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 60.

<sup>105</sup> "Process of Beatification."

<sup>106</sup> Enrico Pepe, "Priestly Formation in the History of the Church," in *Priests of the Future: Formation and Communion*, ed. Michael Mulvey (New York City: New City Press, 1991), 19-20.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 19-20. *Optatam Totius* #16 states, "[The] scientific exposition ['of moral theology'], nourished more on the teaching of the Bible, should shed light on the loftiness of the calling of the faithful in Christ [or *Christifideles*] and the obligation that is theirs of bearing fruit in charity for the life of the world."

foundational insights, Focolare demonstrates the importance of vocational diversity within an understanding of the Church as communion.

What seems to be the most specifically outstanding feature of Focolare is the intensity of its radical and unified sense of communitarian identity, which all *focolarini* share. This characteristic extends across the major themes of Focolare, namely, 1) 'Jesus in the midst' of those gathered in his name; 2) the total self-giving love of Christ, epitomized in the image of Christ on the cross, or "Jesus Forsaken;" and 3) the eschatological oneness, emanating from the Trinity that binds each person to God and each person to one's neighbor. This Trinitarian unity, along with the other foundational components of Focolare's spirituality of unity, comprise a single whole, an all-consuming calling and way of life, which is realized most completely in the *communion* that binds the Church together with God and with all humanity. These particularized concepts that define Focolare spirituality do not require that a person become a member of Focolare. They are, however, compelling lessons on the nature of communion, the importance of vocational discernment, and the communitarian orientation by which the Church, as a unified body, can be God's agent on earth, bringing a powerful witness of holiness and wholeness to the world. This holiness and wholeness extends to the mundane circumstances of everyday, secular life, like work and family.

Recalling the "fourth option" for a "lay vocation" that was suggested at the 1987 Synod on the laity, Lubich and her 'first companions' consecrated their lives to a "realization of God as Love," which gave birth not only to the communal 'charism of unity' but also to what Lubich calls the "Fourth Way." This is the term Lubich used to describe the manifestation of this charism in the life of her followers, over forty years prior to the 1987 Synod.<sup>108</sup> Inspired by her teenage conversion experience, while attending a Catholic Action conference at the shrine of the Holy Family in Loreto, Lubich modeled the consecrated way of life within her charism, the Fourth Way, as a type of lay and consecrated state of life, which is neither simply lay nor simply religious.<sup>109</sup> Mitchell describes this vocation as "a new spiritual reality that God was sharing with [Focolare] through Lubich;"<sup>110</sup> it is a communal charism. To illustrate the efficacy of this communal view of charism, the analogy is often drawn that religious congregations share the charism of their founders, such as those of St. Benedict or St. Francis. Chiara Lubich discerned that "unity" was the gift that God called her to share with all of humanity through her movement.<sup>111</sup> Among the many foundational scriptural bases of this unity is 1 John 3:24, which states that 'keeping Christ's

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<sup>108</sup> Mitchell, 174-175.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 173.

commandments,' the most basic of which is to love God and neighbor, constitutes the "condition" of God's abiding presence.<sup>112</sup>

A familiar trademark of the Focolare's spirituality of unity is that of 'Jesus forsaken,' where Christ manifests the ultimate expression of self-emptying love and obedient filiiety by dying on the Cross.<sup>113</sup> Lubich teaches that God is calling *focolarini* to live out the spirit of Jesus forsaken, to be self-emptying and obedient to God's will.<sup>114</sup> Similarly, Archbishop Williams argues that the people of God minister and mediate God's saving action in the world, redeeming the world from sin and death.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, living in communion with Jesus Forsaken is an essential component to the common priesthood of the baptized, as the very action of baptism *immerses* the disciple into Christ's paschal mystery. In other words, when Christians practice self-sacrifice for others, they participate in a sacramental way in Christ's act of redemption, his own self-sacrifice in obedience to the Father's will. Since laypersons have not received Holy Orders, their 'priesthood' flows from the 'organic convergence' with Christ, for which Connor argued, whose source is the grace of baptism and nourished by the Eucharist.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 102-103. I John 3:24 reads, "All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us."

<sup>113</sup> Chiara Lubich, "The Spirituality of the Focolare Movement and the Effects it Produces in the Priests Who Live It," in *Priests of the Future: Formation and Communion*, ed. Michael Mulvey (New York City: New City Press, 1991), 31.

<sup>114</sup> Lubich, *The Cry*, 36-37.

<sup>115</sup> Williams, 13-14.

<sup>116</sup> Lubich, *The Cry* 109-110.

Concerning the relationship between the universal vocation of baptism, which is shared by all Christ's faithful (or *Christifideles*), and the particular vocation to the ordained priesthood, Lubich warns priests not to equate their love of God, which is Focolare's self-defined 'Ideal,' with their priesthood. Rather, their call to the priesthood emanates from doing God's will, which follows first from living the Ideal.<sup>117</sup> According to Lubich, "Jesus crucified! ... He is the most ardent love."<sup>118</sup> Within the Focolare movement, those members "who feel a call to priesthood" are taught to understand that "their first vocation [is] as *focolarini*,"<sup>119</sup> whose charism of unity gives particular form to the universal call to holiness, to which all Christians are called.

Lubich's spirituality connects well the concepts of vocation, self-sacrificing divine love (or charity),<sup>120</sup> Christ's redemption, and the *munera* of priesthood in both the sacramental and existential sense. For a *focolarini*, one need only invoke "Jesus Forsaken" for all of these concepts to be conveyed. For Catholic laypersons today, Focolare offers a language by which they may 'hear' the ministerial or 'priestly' calling that God already issues to them by their baptism. By comprehending this vocation, not only can the laity find their place within the whole of the Church's communion as *Christifideles*, but they can also understand

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<sup>117</sup> Lubich, "The Spirituality of the Focolare Movement," 34.

<sup>118</sup> Lubich, *The Cry*, 37.

<sup>119</sup> Gallagher, 209.

<sup>120</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 140.

their positive identity and specific apostolate as laypersons living in the secular world. It is specifically to this secular world that the lay faithful (or *Christifideles laici*) are called to be ministers of Christ's saving word. Such a secular vocation requires self-sacrifice, the very earthly abandonment felt by Christ on the Cross, which, paradoxically is the very act of loving and serving, uniting oneself to the ever-giving Trinitarian God and to humanity, who live in a world in need of redemption.

#### Dorothy Day, the Catholic Worker and Their Vocation to Serve the Poor

The Catholic Worker was born out of the grit of New York sidewalks, soup kettles, newspaper ink and the Great Depression. Gary MacEoin describes the 1932 meeting of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, as the "decisive event in creating a unique style of lay Catholic movement."<sup>121</sup> At that time, Day was a fairly recent convert to Catholicism living in New York. A journalist by profession, she was a single mother and a social radical with close ties to communists. Day's own vocation, which she discerned as serving the poor and lowly in

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<sup>121</sup> Gary MacEoin, "Lay Movements in the United States Before Vatican II," *America* 165, no. 3 (August 3-10, 1991), 61-62; Jim Forest, *Love Is the Measure: A Biography of Dorothy Day, Founder of The Catholic Worker*, Revised ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), 56. MacEoin is described as a "frequent contributor to *America*" and long-time associate of the Catholic Worker. Forest is a former editor of the *Catholic Worker* and is now a spiritual writer and Eastern Orthodox priest.

society,<sup>122</sup> was confirmed upon meeting Maurin, soon after she returned from the hunger marches that had just taken place in Washington, D.C. At these marches, Day reports having had a specific vocational epiphany at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>123</sup> At the time, Day, who had in previous years worked briefly as a screenwriter in Hollywood and spent 1930 in Mexico City, writing for *Commonweal*, was covering the hunger marches for both *Commonweal* and *America*.<sup>124</sup> By witnessing the active involvement of communists in the leadership of these marches, Day realized that the communists, not the Catholic Church, were leading the advocacy for and organizing the poor.<sup>125</sup> She felt compelled and called to help remedy this Catholic absence.

Upon meeting Day, Maurin immediately began his 'indoctrination' of her into an "entirely new education."<sup>126</sup> Maurin's goal in organizing a Catholic

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<sup>122</sup> AA #2 states, "For the Christian vocation by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate." Consistent with the previously cited *Lineamenta* to the 1987 Synod, vocation endures, whereas mission, or 'apostolate,' is bound to earthly existence. Therefore, as AA #1 states, "The apostolate of the laity derives from their Christian vocation." Vocation is anterior to mission. To understand Day's claim to have a vocation to serve the poor, it is important to make the distinction that serving the poor is her specific form of apostolate to which she felt called.

<sup>123</sup> Dorothy Day, *Selected Writings*, ed. Robert Ellsberg (Marknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), 41.

<sup>124</sup> Forest, 53-54.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 53, 55. Day noted that the communists were forming outreach and advocacy groups, like the "Unemployed Councils" and the "Workers' Alliance," but the Catholic Church did not pro-actively compete as an effective counter-weight.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-57; Dorothy Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 1997 ed., Forward by Thomas Merton. Introduction by Robert Coles [1983] (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1963), 7. Prior to meeting Day, Maurin had been working and living at a "Catholic boys' camp in upstate New York," before finding his way to New York City, where he lived in a "flop house." Once in New York, he spent his time

revolutionary movement was "to bring the workers to the scholars" and vice versa.<sup>127</sup> Maurin reportedly came off too strongly to Day at first,<sup>128</sup> though she gradually warmed up to his ideas, which amounted to a "program of social change" that highlighted "sanctity and community."<sup>129</sup> According to Jim Forest, Day possessed a fervent, socially-conscious faith, but she lacked a concrete community with whom to share it.<sup>130</sup> Day stated that Maurin's "community" was "the poor,"<sup>131</sup> which he embraced as "his bride."<sup>132</sup> This 'marital' analogy suggests a sense of vocational calling, a way of life and a profound identification, specifically for the poor. Recalling the analysis above concerning the laity's share in the *tria munera* of Christ as priest, prophet and king, Day and Maurin's specific sense of vocation to the poor reflects the mediating presence of Christ in the world, the Christ of sacrifice and redemption, the Christ of a new life of unity and dignity. In serving this 'priestly' role, the Catholic Worker also prophesies a vision of the Kingdom here-and-now. This 'vocation to the poor' also offers an

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reading in the library or preaching the social gospel in Union Square to whomever would listen to him.

<sup>127</sup> Mel Piehl, *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 67. Piehl teaches at Valparaiso University.

<sup>128</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 4-5.

<sup>129</sup> Forest, 56.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 55. Quoting Day, who wrote, "My self-absorption seemed sinful as I watched my brothers in the struggle ... How our dear Lord must love them ... they were His friends, His comrades."

<sup>131</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 97.

<sup>132</sup> Forest, 57.

alternative vision to the idea of a "lay vocation" as a 'fourth option.' Like Lubich, both Day and Maurin remained laypersons throughout their lives.

Initially, there was no concrete plan for starting anything other than a Catholic newspaper to communicate Maurin's radical social ideas.<sup>133</sup> Day agreed to contribute her talents as a journalist and to serve as editor.<sup>134</sup> He felt that a "radical Catholic paper" was needed to "publicize Catholic social teaching ...[and] the peaceful transformation of society."<sup>135</sup> The newspaper, the *Catholic Worker*, debuted on May 1, 1933.<sup>136</sup> The first issue contained six of Peter Maurin's "Easy Essays," a "blend of manifesto and poetry," one of which protested what he considered the bourgeois subservience of the Church to the wealthy and powerful in society.<sup>137</sup> Overall, however, Maurin was sorely disappointed in the first issue, because he thought the paper came across as too class conscious, preventing it from being "everyone's paper."<sup>138</sup> He wanted more emphasis on

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<sup>133</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 95; Forest, 57. Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 7. Quoting Lenin, Maurin claimed, "there is no revolution without a *theory* of revolution" (emphasis added).

<sup>134</sup> Forest, 58.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 59. The paper was distributed throughout Union Square in New York City, among the "radicals and workers," who were celebrating May Day.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 58; Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 11. From Maurin's "Easy Essay": "In the Catholic Church one never needs any money to start a good work ... People are what are important. If you have the people and they are willing to do the work – that is the thing. God cannot be outdone in generosity." Day felt that this verse summarizes Maurin's logistical plan for founding the *Catholic Worker*.

<sup>138</sup> Forest, 60.

how society was to be re-ordered.<sup>139</sup> From the second issue and thereafter, the *Catholic Worker* reflected more of Maurin's philosophy.<sup>140</sup>

What quickly resulted from the inception of the "penny a copy" paper, however, was the founding of a movement, whose "primary achievement" was to fuse the ethics of the "radical gospel" to American Catholicism for the first time.<sup>141</sup> Piehl summarizes the Catholic Worker as "a movement of intellectual and spiritual renewal."<sup>142</sup> Despite becoming the "mother and [eventually] grandmother" to the "far-flung family" that the Catholic Worker would become, Day herself credited Maurin's philosophy as the "catalyst" for the movement's success.<sup>143</sup>

Peter Maurin was born a French peasant, taught briefly at a Christian Brothers' school, worked as an itinerate laborer and is ultimately remembered as a Catholic social philosopher, who shaped the guiding principles of the movement.<sup>144</sup> Maurin embodied his own best role model of a worker-scholar, a disciple of Jesus Christ living and working in the world. The principle sources for

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>141</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 67, 244.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>143</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 142.

<sup>144</sup> Forest, 57; Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 96. Peter Maurin (1877-1949) was the oldest of 22 children; entered the Christian Brothers at the age of 16 and left the order 9 years later; taught in a Christian Brothers' school in Paris; in 1902, he became active in *Le Sillon* ("the Furrow"), a pacifist "movement," led by Marc Sangnier, "which advocated Christian democracy and supported cooperatives and unions;" later migrated to Canada, where he "homesteaded in Saskatewan;" later wandered to the U.S. (illegally), where he worked in a stone quarry, as a lumber jack, as a janitor, dug ditches, worked on wheat farms, railroads, in steel mills and coal mines; "started a language school" in Chicago. Day referred to his life an "apostolate to the worker."

what Maurin called his "indoctrination," his social philosophy and methodology, included 1) Christ-centered gospel living; 2) Thomist "socioeconomic principles;" 3) Christian personalism, such as that developed by Berdyaev, Mounier, Peguy and Maritain (among many others); and 4) Catholic social teaching, in the tradition of *Rerum Novarum* and Pius XI.<sup>145</sup> Maurin's "three-point program," which served as a strategy for what he referred to as the "Green Revolution," included 1) "roundtable discussions," 2) "Houses of Hospitality" and 3) "farming communes."<sup>146</sup> The social "revolution" that Maurin sought to build was "a new society within the shell of the old."<sup>147</sup>

While Day admitted that Maurin's thick French accent was an "obstacle" to the communication of his ideas, he excelled in teaching small groups, and Day took exception to Maurin's reputation as a "nonstop talker," who did not let anyone else speak.<sup>148</sup> Day described Maurin as an effective "agitator," who

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<sup>145</sup> Ann O'Connor and Peter King, "What's Catholic About the Catholic Worker Movement? Then and Now," in *Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays*, ed. Phillip M. Runkel and Susan Mountin William J. Thorn (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001), 134. O'Connor and King lead the Unity Kitchen Catholic Worker Community in Syracuse, NY.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 135; Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 60. Maurin also referred to "roundtable discussions" as "clarification of thought," which was intended to prevent "trained minds from becoming academic" and "superficial." Houses of Hospitality were meant to "... to give the rich the opportunity to serve the poor." Finally, another common name given to Maurin's farming model was 'agronomic university,' which were supposed to afford those who were out of work the opportunity to raise their own food and to learn new trades.

<sup>147</sup> Forest, 57-58, quoting Maurin.

<sup>148</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 47, 101. Day describes how Maurin would teach "between the rows of beans, hoe in hand." She recalls a typical Maurin lecture, where through twisting phrases and syllogisms, he bemoaned the waste of "superfluous goods" on such things as sky-

made people examine their social consciences, "motives" and "vocations."<sup>149</sup> Overall, Day wrote that Maurin was "revered as a saint, but," she continued, "we neglected him, too."<sup>150</sup> When living on the Catholic Worker's farm commune in Staten Island, toward the end of his life, Maurin kept a rigorous schedule of work and prayer, spending at least five hours per day engaged in manual labor.<sup>151</sup> According to Day, Maurin "asked nothing for himself, so he got nothing."<sup>152</sup> Despite what Piehl argues is an exaggerated legacy of actual leadership, Maurin's primary role in the Catholic Worker was to provide Day with a sense of intellectual and philosophical credibility, as well as balancing out "Day's status as a middle class American convert ... enabling her to feel some support as she assumed a position of leadership," according to Piehl.<sup>153</sup>

The success of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper and the movement was rapid and significant. From its debut in May 1933 to November of that same year, the circulation of the *Catholic Worker* rose from 2500 copies to at least 20,000.<sup>154</sup> From 1935 to 1940, circulation rose from 65,000 copies to 185,000, all

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scrapers and industrial technologies, which ironically, made industry more productive but "increase unemployment."

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>153</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 64. Forest, 87. Perhaps signaling Maurin's ultimate legacy and reputation in his own day, Forest reports that Maurin's obituary appeared both in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano* and in *Time* magazine.

<sup>154</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 67; Forest, 62. Forest reports the growth of first year circulation went from 2500 copies to 75,000.

the while maintaining a completely volunteer editorial staff.<sup>155</sup> Jim Forest argues that the key to the paper's success seemed to be its unique and intimate "voice," which sounded "like a letter between friends."<sup>156</sup> Day's influence and leadership over the *Catholic Worker* was primarily exercised by serving on the editorial staff of the *Catholic Worker* as its principal until 1940, after which she continued to write her column and exercised some editorial control thereafter.<sup>157</sup> Yet, Day never let her passion for the content of the paper compromise her journalistic standards or the overall quality of the paper.<sup>158</sup> Day's regular column, "Day by Day," which later became, "On Pilgrimage," contained personal reflections with a 'folksy' tone.<sup>159</sup> Her early columns vividly described life in the House of Hospitality or the hardships of the Depression.<sup>160</sup>

The rapid growth of the movement was not confined to the paper. At Maurin's invitation, two unemployed men, Dolan and Egan, began showing up at the New York City flat that Day and her daughter shared with Day's brother and sister-in-law when she first met Maurin.<sup>161</sup> Day understood that this was a challenge to practice what she was preaching in the paper. In 1936, the first house of hospitality (that was acquired for that purpose) opened and remained

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<sup>155</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 67.

<sup>156</sup> Forest, 62.

<sup>157</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 77.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>160</sup> Forest, 63.

<sup>161</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 95-96.

the New York headquarters until 1950. Like the movement itself, the Mott Street "St. Joseph's House of Hospitality" expanded as the need arose, eventually "occupying thirty-eight rooms and two stores."<sup>162</sup> Piehl estimates that there were about eighteen Catholic Worker houses in 1936, and by 1941, "thirty-two Houses of Hospitality" operated in "twenty-seven cities."<sup>163</sup> Today, the movement reports that there are nearly two hundred Catholic Worker communities.<sup>164</sup> Actual statistics and estimates vary wildly; however, Forest reports that the Mott Street St. Joseph's House alone fed four hundred people per day in 1937, a figure that reportedly doubled the next year.<sup>165</sup>

The European tradition of Catholic "hospices" served as Maurin's model for the Houses of Hospitality, which were "free guest houses."<sup>166</sup> Maurin envisioned these houses serving as both a "friendly shelter" and as "centers of prayer, discussion, and study."<sup>167</sup> Having no strict formula for operation and no legal ties to the original New York house, the range of activities conducted out of the different Catholic Worker houses that sprang up around the country spanned from "labor organizing, rent strikes, and similar forms of direct social action; others concentrated on the works of mercy and liturgical

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<sup>162</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 34.

<sup>163</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 109; Forest, 66. Forest's figure for the number of houses of hospitality by 1936 is thirty-three.

<sup>164</sup> Catholic Worker Movement [Home Page]; available from [www.catholicworker.org/index](http://www.catholicworker.org/index); accessed July 19, 2006). The claim is made that there are "over 185 Catholic Worker communities."

<sup>165</sup> Forest, 66.

<sup>166</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 8-9; Forest, 64. Forest notes that a fifth century ecumenical council "obliged bishops to establish houses of hospitality in connection with each parish."

<sup>167</sup> Forest, 65.

concerns.”<sup>168</sup> Beyond offering shelter to the ‘stranger,’ food to the hungry and clothing to the ‘naked,’ Maurin and Day hoped to set an example for practicing hospitality as a basic value in the Christian life; “every home,” they argued, “should have its ‘Christ room’ open to receive [the poor as] the ambassadors of God.”<sup>169</sup> Maurin hoped that Christian communities would return to the patristic ideal of offering hospitality to the poor as a regular service of every Catholic parish.<sup>170</sup>

Gerard Foley claims “the role of the church in the world is somewhat determined by how we view the role of the laity in the world.”<sup>171</sup> To show some historical role models who have embodied their baptismal calling to holiness and mission in the Church and in society, Foley chose Dorothy Day and United Farm Workers’ leader, Cesar Chavez, both of whom were laypersons ‘making a difference’ in society by sharing “gospel values” in temporal affairs (like politics, economics, and social justice).<sup>172</sup> Day’s last arrest for civil disobedience came in the early 1970s, while picketing with Chavez and striking farm workers in California.<sup>173</sup> For Chavez and Day, “religious faith” and “nonviolence” were major themes that both shared.<sup>174</sup> Recalling Cardinal Newman’s analysis of the *tria munera*, one may be compelled to believe that the examples of leadership by

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<sup>168</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 110.

<sup>169</sup> Forest, 65, quoting Maurin; Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 198.

<sup>170</sup> Forest, 65.

<sup>171</sup> Foley, *Empowering the Laity*, 193.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>173</sup> Forest, 123.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-121.

figures like Day and Cesar Chavez might be considered 'heroic' or 'prophetic' – an almost unattainable standard for the average person. However, Leon Bloy, in his novel *The Woman Who was Poor*, wrote, "there is only one sorrow and that is not to be a saint."<sup>175</sup> Like Chiara Lubich and Focolare's image of "Jesus Forsaken," Day embraced the kind of redemptive suffering to which martyrs attest. Reinforcing her pacifist stance during World War II, Day reiterated that embracing the Cross was "the only path to the resurrection," meaning that new life can be attained only at the cost of much suffering.<sup>176</sup> Despite the deep divisions this anti-war stance caused in the *Catholic Worker*, Day did not compromise her vision of the gospel ideal for the sake of expediency, no matter what the cost might have been. Day writes, "We are all called to be saints and we might as well get over our bourgeois fear of the name."<sup>177</sup> Yet, Jim Forest recalls that Day despised acclaim, especially when admirers made reference to her being a 'living saint.' To such adulation, she would respond, "Don't call me a

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<sup>175</sup> Robert F. Morneau, "Empowering Lay Leadership in the Church: Challenges and Responsibilities," in *That They Might Live: Power, Empowerment and Leadership in the Church*, ed. Michael Downey (New York City: Crossroad, 1991), 102, quoting Bloy. Morneau is a spiritual writer and auxiliary bishop of Green Bay, WI.

<sup>176</sup> Forest, 74.

<sup>177</sup> Mark Zwick and Louise Zwick, "Roots of the Catholic Worker Movement: Saints and Philosophers Who Influenced Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin," in *Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays*, ed. Phillip Runkel William Thorn, and Susan Mountin (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001), 71, quoting Day. The Zwicks are co-founders of the Casa Juan Diego in Houston, TX, and edit the *Houston Catholic Worker*.

saint; I don't want to be dismissed so easily."<sup>178</sup> Here, Day's humility in the face of accepting the consequences of her vocation become apparent.

The particular lay character of the Catholic Worker was viewed by the Catholic Workers themselves as a mode of putting Catholic Action into concrete form.<sup>179</sup> However, the movement never fit into the official definition of "Catholic Action," specifically as the laity participating in the apostolate of the hierarchy. Still, Dorothy Day "interpreted the vocation of the Catholic Workers as an apostolic calling," and the Catholic Worker's history does run parallel to that of the rise of the lay apostolate through Catholic Action.<sup>180</sup> In attempting to describe 'what the Catholic Worker is' or 'who is a Catholic Worker,' Day wrote that the Catholic Worker is "a paper, but it is also a movement."<sup>181</sup> Further, she stated that both the readers and editors of the paper "are Catholic Workers" until they disagree, she continues with a tinge of sarcasm, and then they are merely "the readers of the *Catholic Worker*."<sup>182</sup> Piehl describes the *Catholic Worker's* readership as a "diverse constituency ... the alienated poor and unemployed, religious leaders, and Catholics concerned about the social implications of their

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<sup>178</sup> Forest, 151, quoting Day.

<sup>179</sup> Patricia M. Vinje, "The Political Holiness of Dorothy Day: Eschatology, Social Reform, and the Works of Mercy," in *Lay Sanctity, Medieval and Modern: A Search for Models*, ed. Ann W. Astell (Notre Dame, IN: University Notre Dame Press, 2000), 169. Patricia Vinje teaches at St. Norbert College, Wisconsin.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>181</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 135.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

faith.”<sup>183</sup> The Catholic Worker was far “ahead of its time,” compared to other movements in the Catholic Church, in terms of “lay leadership”... “social involvement” ... intellectual openness” ... [and] “ecumenical spirit.”<sup>184</sup> These achievements anticipated the Church of Vatican II and “strengthened the already vigorous liberal social tradition” in American Catholicism, offering an “alternative model” to the existing hierarchical status quo, which included Catholic Action at that time.<sup>185</sup> From this data, a keen awareness is detected of how the apostolic vocation of the laity, that is, the role played by lay persons in the mission of the Church, brings together the best of faith-informed prophetic witness, especially through their advocacy and social commentary, as well as the most practical forms of work, community life, self-sacrificing service.

The position of the Catholic Worker in American Catholicism in the 1930s might be described as popular, but by the 1960s, the movement was nothing short of a “giant among Catholic intellectuals,” according to Sicius, influencing and inspiring the developing “theology of peace.”<sup>186</sup> Responding to the so-called “Milwaukee 14” and other jailed draft resisters, Day described their actions as

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<sup>183</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 67.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Francis J. Sicius, *The Chicago Catholic Worker and the Emergence of Lay Activism in the Church* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 172. Sicius teaches at St. Thomas University, Miami, FL.

fulfilling a "vocation to demonstrate ... Works of Mercy ... [and to do] penance," as the "opposite of the works of war."<sup>187</sup>

Piehl claims Dorothy Day is

perhaps ... the most influential American Catholic of the last hundred years [by her] example of active love, [which] helped bring about a reformation ... rooted in the sacredness of life, the truth that we are each made in the image and likeness of God, and the real presence of Christ in the poor.<sup>188</sup>

The timing and energy of movements, like the Catholic Worker, Grail, Friendship House, and Focolare, helped fuel an emerging and progressive theology of the laity, which culminated with Vatican II. The "New Theologians," including Congar, Danielou, and de Lubac, who contributed much to the reforms of Vatican II, were often associated with the personalist social thought of Mounier, Berdyaev, and Maritain, who served as primary theoretical sources for Maurin and the mission of the Catholic Worker.<sup>189</sup>

Through the content of the *Catholic Worker*, Day and other editors of the paper "promoted a general Catholic [intellectual] consciousness ... that complemented its treatment of the gritty conditions in American factories and slums."<sup>190</sup> Mel Piehl writes, the Catholic Workers

addressed the problem of spiritual apathy by attempting to develop a synthesis of traditional Catholic spirituality and American social ideals,

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<sup>187</sup> Day, *Selected Writings*, 180.

<sup>188</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 156.

<sup>189</sup> Zwick and Zwick, "Roots of the Catholic Worker Movement," 59 – 76.

<sup>190</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 74.

bringing together the ancient religious goal of communion with God and the modern goal of transforming the world by social commitment.<sup>191</sup>

The goal of the Catholic Worker movement was to synthesize in a practical way all of their diverse sources, both Catholic and American. Their means for achieving this was Day's own articulate redaction of Maurin's philosophical ideas and through their own 'experimental example.'<sup>192</sup> In these respects, the Catholic Worker anticipated a later understanding of the ecclesiology of communion, which marks the maturation of the ecclesiology of Day and Maurin's time, the Mystical Body of Christ.<sup>193</sup> The Catholic Worker also foreshadowed the social engagement encouraged by Vatican II, particularly in *Gaudium et Spes*,<sup>194</sup> which dealt with the Church's role in the modern world. The Catholic Workers' mission initiated new dialogues between religion and culture.<sup>195</sup> For this reason, the Catholic Worker demonstrates and provides a suitable example by which lay

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 246.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 85-86. Piehl acknowledges that the "Mystical Body of Christ" is the ecclesiology that shaped the Catholic Worker's view of Church, which they shared with Fr. Virgil Michel and the liturgical renewal movement of which he was a part. The Mystical Body of Christ ecclesiology emanated an "ancient" vision of the "sacraments as the model for the real relations among men [sic] in society." This prompted a call for a "radical reconstruction of human society." Piehl writes, "in protest against some social evil, [Dorothy] Day frequently quoted the lament of Clement of Alexandria: 'Why do the Members of Christ tear one another? Why do we rise up against our own Body?'" (examples of her usage of this passage can be found in Day's *Catholic Worker* columns in October 1934 and January 1939).

<sup>194</sup> GS #43, which states, "Nor ... are they any less wide of the mark who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations, and who imagine they can plunge themselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from the religious life. This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age."

<sup>195</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 245.

Catholics today can respond to the many spiritual and socio-cultural challenges of the twenty-first century.

Canon 216 of the 1983 revision of ecclesiastical law, states in its entirety,

Since they share the Church's mission, all Christ's faithful have the right to promote and support apostolic action, by their own initiative, undertaken according to their state and condition. No initiative, however, can lay claim to the title 'catholic' without the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority.<sup>196</sup>

Given that the Catholic Worker has never submitted statutes for ecclesiastical approval, like Focolare and other "ecclesial movements," this canon raises the question, 'Should the Catholic Worker use the word 'Catholic' in their title?' The position taken here is that the Catholic Worker, like Focolare, has embodied the understanding of the Church as a unified and diverse communion, and they have remained faithful to that ecclesiology. The *Catholic Worker's* editorial voice remained "emphatically devoted to the Catholic faith," despite their total independence from "official sponsorship, and thus subject to no religious discipline except in faith and morals."<sup>197</sup> Day makes the statement in *Loaves and Fishes*, "We never felt it was necessary to ask permission to perform the works of

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<sup>196</sup> CIC # 215-216. Canon 215 reads as follows: "Christ's faithful may freely establish and direct associations which serve charitable or pious purposes or which foster the Christian vocation in the world, and they may hold meetings to pursue these purposes by common effort."

<sup>197</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 91.

mercy."<sup>198</sup> Within the movement itself, members viewed traditional Church teachings as the source of its radical activism.<sup>199</sup>

While finding a clear-cut example of Lubich criticizing the hierarchy is virtually impossible, such examples are not so hard to come by from Dorothy Day. Day declared her annoyance at the "luxury of the Church," which included its bureaucracy, the high costs for the Church's services, and the "conservatism of the hierarchy."<sup>200</sup> Yet, she also argued, almost in the same breath, that the clergy continue to be a constant and irreplaceable presence in the lives of Catholics.<sup>201</sup> Prior to her consistent and unflinching opposition to World War II, the Catholic Worker's most controversial stance was its criticism of both the Fascists and the Communists during the Spanish Civil War, and the movement's neutrality in the conflict, when most Catholic officials supported Franco's pro-Fascist forces.<sup>202</sup> When Day came out publicly and urged young men not to register for the draft during World War II, Cardinal Spellman told her she had "gone too far."<sup>203</sup> Despite remaining completely steadfast in her opposition to the war, and the Church's "complicity in it," Day did agree that young men had to

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<sup>198</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 123.

<sup>199</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 138.

<sup>200</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 126.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 193.

<sup>203</sup> Forest, 76.

follow their consciences in deciding the right course, rather than being unduly swayed by her convictions.<sup>204</sup>

Piehl argues that on "matters of faith and morals," Day revered the "complete authority" of the hierarchy, despite what she considered "sometimes dubious social, economic and political entanglements"<sup>205</sup> in which the clergy might have found themselves and from which they could expect the *Catholic Worker* to be blunt in its honest criticism. Day says that many clergy appreciated the work the movement did, which they referred to as "taking up the slack," serving those who 'fell through the cracks' of the usual Catholic social service system.<sup>206</sup> Day attributes the Catholic Worker's early success in so many cities to hierarchical support, writing, "the bishops wanted more of them [Catholic Worker houses]."<sup>207</sup> Day even reported that Cardinal Hayes of New York "approved" of their charitable activities, according to a message she received in 1933.<sup>208</sup> Day stated her belief that despite both the criticism and support the Catholic Worker might have received from particular priests or bishops, the hierarchy never published any official statement for or against the Catholic

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 90.

<sup>206</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 42.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 122. Day continues in retrospect, "It was understood that we would make mistakes," and Day admits those mistakes were made.

Worker.<sup>209</sup> Day also relays a quote by an unidentified person, who called the Catholic Worker a form of "group therapy ... [and] sooner or later every malcontented Catholic ends up at the Catholic Worker ... they see themselves in everyone else and cure themselves."<sup>210</sup> From these examples of the Catholic Worker's fidelity and criticism of the Church, an important insight emerges about the role the lay apostolate plays and the benefit to the Church in distinguishing 'spheres of influence' between the clergy and the laity. Karl Rahner affirms that the laity have a "right and duty ...without further commission," beyond the sacraments of initiation, "to bear witness to the faith and to be concerned with the salvation of the world."<sup>211</sup> Echoing Rahner, Day saw no reason to seek approval to do what she viewed as basic Christian duty. At the same time, she humbly valued what clerical affirmation she did receive. In criticizing the Church, especially when the hierarchy becomes 'entangled' in secular affairs, Day is not only pointing to the appropriateness of apostolic boundaries, but it is her very autonomy that allowed her to speak 'truth to power.' Still, she viewed the Catholic Worker as part of the Church.

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid. Dorothy Day was mentioned alongside Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. by the U.S. bishops in their 1983 pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace" (#117). Affirming her witness to non-violence, the bishops make no mention of the Catholic Worker as a movement. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response (U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1983)," in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, ed. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 518.

<sup>210</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 137.

<sup>211</sup> Hagstrom, 29, quoting Rahner.

Peter Maurin originally wanted the newspaper to be called "*The Catholic Radical*,"<sup>212</sup> because the root word for 'radical' is "root [in Latin, *radix*], which illustrated his feeling that the movement and the paper should never compromise itself with superficial recommendations, but to dig to the "root ... of personal and social problems."<sup>213</sup> Instead, the paper and the subsequent movement it spawned were named the "Catholic Worker." The use of the word "Catholic" in the title famously became an issue in March of 1951, when Cardinal Spellman summoned Day to the chancery on the heels of her support of gravediggers, who were striking against the archdiocese.<sup>214</sup> Day was told to "cease publication [of the *Catholic Worker*] or change [its] name."<sup>215</sup> This order was subsequently rescinded.<sup>216</sup> Yet, despite the various "grumbling" about the Church, Day stated emphatically, "It was the word Catholic that united us all."<sup>217</sup> For all of the complicated sides to Catholic Worker's relationship to the hierarchy, Day both respected the views of others within the Church, including the criticism she once received from a "monsignor" (not identified) who "attacked the *Catholic Worker*

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<sup>212</sup> Forest, 60; Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 59.

<sup>213</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 59.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid. Piehl reports that Day was beckoned to the archdiocesan headquarters "on at least four or five occasions." Forest, 94.

<sup>215</sup> Forest, 94-95. Forest argues that the order from the archdiocese came as retaliation for Day's "[1] public criticism of the cardinal and [for her] ... [2] participation in ... the first picket line of lay Catholics in front of any bishop's chancery, and [3] her refusal to condemn communists."

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 95. After Day wrote a humble, compelling and somewhat contrite defense of the paper to the archdiocese, their order to change the name or cease publication was rescinded. She claimed that she would have submitted to the order, but the other editors did not agree, and Day wanted to prevent "scandal" for her readers.

<sup>217</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 38.

as subversive."<sup>218</sup> Additionally, Day claimed in a 1963 letter to Los Angeles Catholic Workers that spending time and energy on criticizing the Church, rather than focusing "on positive social action" constituted "the temptation of the devil to divert our energies."<sup>219</sup> The Catholic Worker was "first and foremost Roman Catholic" in its character and self-understanding.<sup>220</sup> Wolfteich concludes, the Catholic Worker's "public witness was deeply rooted in Christian spirituality."<sup>221</sup> Dorothy Day's life and example specifically emanated from her baptismal calling to work for the fulfillment of the Kingdom and her specific charism for spiritual leadership and social witness in an integrated program of holiness, fidelity, work, and social change.

### Summary of Chapter One

By examining the theological development of the ecclesial identity of the laity leading up to and after the Second Vatican Council, this chapter has laid the groundwork for understanding how Focolare and the Catholic Worker have demonstrated these developments, creating viable models for the laity today to respond to their baptismal vocation to holiness and apostolic mission in the social and cultural circumstances in which they live. Through solidarity and charity, the

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 92, quoted from Day's column in the January 1976 *Catholic Worker*, vol. 42.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., quoting Day.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>221</sup> Claire E. Wolfteich, *American Catholics Through the Twentieth Century: Spirituality, Lay Experience and Public Life* (New York City: Crossroad, 2001), 33.

laity are called to engage in the mission of Christ and his Church through the communitarian mission of the lay apostolate, which both includes collaboration with the hierarchy, such as Catholic Action, and through their own initiative. Because the laity live and work in the secular world, raising families and ordering society through politics and economics, their particular vocation is to bring the gospel of Christ in to secular society, transforming it and inculcating a society of peace, justice and holiness. Internally, within the Church, the clergy have a particular vocation to teach, govern, and sanctify the People of God, forming and supporting them for this apostolic mission in the world. This distinction of ecclesial roles, within a unified apostolic mission in which all baptized disciples are called to holiness and participation in the divine life of the Trinity and in Christ's paschal mystery comprises the understanding of the Church, or ecclesiology, of communion.

By reviewing the historical developments that shaped the origins of both Focolare and the Catholic Worker, this chapter has shown how their major founders, Peter Maurin, Dorothy Day and Chiara Lubich demonstrated the key principles of the developing theology of the laity in the twentieth century. By respecting the key distinctions and commonalities of the different states of life in the Church, both movements also demonstrate the understanding of the Church as a communion, even as the understanding of that concept has evolved through

the imagery of the Church as both the Mystical Body of Christ and as the People of God. Both of those images of Church are subsumed and included in communion ecclesiology. The uniqueness of each movement's manner of responding to their vocations derived in part from their particular cultural contexts. By participating in the social and religious currents of their times and places, each movement not only demonstrates the role of the laity in spreading the gospel of Christ but also the way in which that evangelizing mission calls the laity to transform their social circumstances. This transformation can be witnessed to by diverse means, whether it is by protesting war and economic injustice or by bolstering the religious identity and vitality of one's culture. This participation in the Church's mission unites Christ's faithful to the *tria munera* (priest, prophetic, and king) of Christ and constitutes their cooperative response to the grace of baptism.

The next chapter will examine the communitarian and personalist principles that both Focolare and the Catholic Worker embody, and how these principles, while distinct, already anticipate a complementary synthesis of one another. Communitarianism addresses issues of the 'group,' which, for the context of Church refer to the "Body of Christ." Personalism addresses issues in reference to the human person, the cell of the "Body," who is made in the image and likeness of God. As mentioned in this chapter, when the Church witnesses

to peace and justice in society, with a preferential option for the poor and lowly, Christ's faithful prophetically witness to society the reality of Christ's Kingdom, both here-and-now and yet to be fulfilled. Solidarity, on the one hand, and subsidiarity and personal freedom and dignity, on the other, are essential to this witness. Therefore, the next chapter will define and reveal how both Focolare and the Catholic Worker demonstrate the appropriate balance of these communitarian and personalist principles, further modeling the lay vocation to mission in the world and ecclesial communion.

## CHAPTER II

### The Catholic Worker and Focolare as Models of Communitarian and Personalist Discipleship

An important consideration for this study is why the two models chosen for this project are the lay Catholic movements, Catholic Worker and Focolare. Intentional faith communities that embody ecclesial communion by their social nature strive toward dialogue, unity, and commitment.<sup>222</sup> In the face of rampant

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<sup>222</sup> Dennis M. Doyle, "Mohler, Schleiermacher, and the roots of communion ecclesiology," *Theological Studies* (September 1, 1996), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library~](http://www.highbeam.com/library~). On "dialogue," Dennis Doyle states, "Once communion, that is, fellowship among believers with God, becomes the primary reference point for identifying what constitutes the Church, many ecumenical avenues open up. Institutional issues remain important, even essential, but they are still secondary to the spiritual dimension of communion. Communion with God and with each other is the deepest reality that Christians share. This basic conceptual scheme allowed Vatican II's *Unitatis redintegratio* no. 3 and *Lumen gentium* no. 15 to replace language about heresies and sects with reference to "separated brothers and sisters" who remain in imperfect but real communion with Catholics and in whom the Holy Spirit is active in a salvific manner." While Doyle applies this aspect of communion to ecumenical relationships, it is equally applicable to varying groups within the Catholic Church as well. Clarke E. Cochran, "Sacrament and solidarity: Catholic social thought and health care policy reform," *Journal of Church and State* (June 22, 1999), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library~](http://www.highbeam.com/library~). Linking communitarian commitment to "solidarity," Cochran (professor of political science and adjunct professor of health organization management at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas) writes, "Although the concept of the 'common good' is an old principle in Catholic social thought, 'solidarity' is a relatively new concept, introduced largely from the Polish context by Pope John Paul II. Solidarity is the virtue of commitment to the common good in the midst of severe temptations to neglect it and to benefit oneself. It is also a virtue leading to commitment to a larger common good than the nation and to community with those not part of one's political system."

individualism and its consequent effect of isolating people from each other, the inherent "communitarian nature"<sup>223</sup> of the Christian Church becomes all the more relevant. As shown by the globalization of markets and the borderless impact of environmental crises, the world's people are learning a more profound sense of interdependence today than ever imagined before in history.<sup>224</sup> Kenan Osbourne points out that even before Vatican II, in the heyday of Catholic Action, "lay movements ... had given the ordinary Christian a collective self-identity, not merely an individualistic self-identity."<sup>225</sup> The corollary to this communitarian renewal is that Catholics began to develop a "growing sense of ownership" and a "responsibility" for the affairs of the Church.<sup>226</sup> Osbourne cites the Catholic Worker as a specific example of collective action, as opposed to privatized spirituality.<sup>227</sup> In 1943, Day was supposed to take a one-year sabbatical in relative solitude; however, within six months, she returned claiming, "Community ... is absolutely necessary."<sup>228</sup> Since the time of Catholic Action, a sense of "communal vision" has become an integral concept to Catholic thought, particularly in the kind of outreach that the Catholic Worker embodied in recognizing the intrinsic human dignity in 'others,' the outsider, the oppressed,

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<sup>223</sup> Thomas A. Kleissler, Margo LeBert, and Mary McGuinness, *Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope* (New York City: Paulist Press, 1991), 15-16.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Osbourne, *Ministry: Lay Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church*, 521-522.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Forest, 83-84.

the poor.<sup>229</sup> Chiara Lubich embraces this same notion of communitarianism, which she refers to as a new "Pentecost," as foretold by theologians like Karl Rahner,<sup>230</sup> and embraced by John Paul II as a kind of missionary theme for the epoch of the 'new millennium.'<sup>231</sup>

The common theme of communitarianism is foundational to the whole concept of what a movement in the Church is in its essence. In *Apostolicam Actuositatem* #8, the primary tasks of the lay apostolate are defined as fostering "solidarity" and "charity" in order to bring about a transformation of the world in the everyday circumstances in which people live.<sup>232</sup> This chapter will show how the Christian's response to the lay vocation, which is cooperation with the grace received through baptism, is a call to community, personal sanctity, and self-giving service. This response demands a constant search for harmony in both personal and communitarian aspects of the Christian life. Both Focolare and the Catholic Worker share this understanding of Christian vocation. The reality of this vocation was examined in the previous chapter, especially in the contexts of the secularity of the laity, the call to service and prophetic social witness, and the universal communion that constitutes the Church. This chapter will focus on the

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<sup>229</sup> Richard G. Cote, *Re-visioning Mission: The Catholic Church and Culture in Postmodern America* (New York City: Paulist Press, 1996), 145; Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 46-47, 99.

<sup>230</sup> Mitchell, 174.

<sup>231</sup> John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (At the Beginning of the Third Millennium), Apostolic Letter (January 6, 2001), #40 and #58.

<sup>232</sup> Mitchell, 173, quoting AA #8.

response to that vocation, especially in the context of Focolare and the Catholic Worker.

### Communitarianism

Communitarianism as a socio-political theory is widely varied in its interpretation, describing many diverse systems of ethics, rather than being a particular ideology of ethical theory all on its own. However, the term can become a landmine when it is used to describe one's set of beliefs, only to have it interpreted by others as one of the many ideologies that have claimed the term as its title, capitalizing the "C," as it were. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify how one is using "communitarianism" to describe those aspects of Focolare and the Catholic Worker, which complement issues defined in reference to the individual on a personal level. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics* (2003) begins its section on "communitarianism" by describing the term as

Advocacy of a social order in which individuals are bound together by common values that foster close communal bonds. A label used loosely to describe the ideas of a number of writers particularly critical of modern liberal political thought [especially "Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Michael Walzer, and Charles Taylor"], because of the importance they attach to 'community.' Hence an antagonism has been presented between communitarianism and liberalism.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Andrew Reeve, "Communitarianism," in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, ed. Iain Mclean and Alistair Mcmillan (Oxford University Press, 2003), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library~](http://www.highbeam.com/library~).

However, Bradley C. S. Watson argues and Andrew Reeve (writing for the *Oxford Dictionary*) agrees that communitarianism is both critical of the "excesses of liberalism," but the concept also has an uneasy kinship to liberalism.<sup>234</sup> Reeve writes that all communitarianism always seeks to account for the intrinsic value of the individual, however, always in reference to the group, whereas liberalism is concerned primarily with the individual as such.<sup>235</sup> Watson surveys what he calls "liberal communitarians," who reject the liberal premise of an "individualist 'state of nature,'" yet liberal communitarians embrace the "liberal social goods of tolerance, equality, authenticity, and participation in community life."<sup>236</sup>

In the Catholic context, Clarke Cochran relates the theological notion of "solidarity" to "sacramentality," stating,

Human persons have ... no other way of coming into or staying in contact with Jesus than through other persons. The "official" seven sacraments are especially significant in this mediation between Jesus and the human, but the entire life of the Catholic Church is also to be sacramental, its actions and institutions bringing persons into contact with other persons in Christ.<sup>237</sup>

Therefore, not only is it apparent by the Church's sacramental nature that the Church is naturally social, but the very relationship of Christians is 'person-to-

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<sup>234</sup> Bradley C.S. Watson, "Liberal Communitarianism as Political Theory," *Perspectives on Political Science* (September 22, 1999), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library~](http://www.highbeam.com/library~). Watson is assistant professor of political science and a fellow in politics and policy at the Center for Economic and Policy Education, Saint Vincent College. Reeve, "Communitarianism." Reeve also admits that the 'antagonism' between communitarians and liberalism is "overdrawn."

<sup>235</sup> Reeve, "Communitarianism."

<sup>236</sup> Watson, "Liberal Communitarianism"

<sup>237</sup> Cochran, "Sacrament and solidarity."

person,' which is essentially personalist as well. This thesis is first and foremost concerned not with the secular context of communitarianism, as it may be associated with a particular party, politician, or theorist, but the primary concern here is the nature of the Church, understood in broad terms as "communion." The same can be said of "personalism," which is both complementary to communitarianism and communitarian itself.

Perhaps the most predictable objections to applying communitarianism to American society deals with defense of individual civil liberties, as opposed to how those individual rights might come into conflict with the "common good." Political commentator, George Will, attempts to address these concerns in his work *Statecraft as Soulcraft* (1983). Will argues that "the perceived fact of man's appetitive nature has been transformed ... into the moral principle that desires should be allowed to flourish relatively unimpeded by law or moral constraint."<sup>238</sup>

Rather, Will seeks

a public philosophy that can rectify the current imbalance between the political order's meticulous concern for material well-being and its fastidious withdrawal from concern for the inner lives and moral character of citizens.<sup>239</sup>

To show how such a 'public philosophy' is not only possible but has already been practiced, Will attributes the setting aside of land for public universities as just

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<sup>238</sup> Watson, "Liberal Communitarianism," citing George Will, *Statecraft as Soulcraft: What Government Does* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983).

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., quoting Will, *Statecraft as Soulcraft*.

such an example of communitarianism in American history. Public universities, according to Will, were meant to "inculcate morals as well as technical skill," not through coercion but through persuasion.<sup>240</sup> In the context of Catholic discipleship, persuasion – rather than coercion – through fortuitous public witness of the common good is a worthy means by which the Church in the world can function in the public arena, without imposing a integrist agenda on a society that respects religious pluralism.

Clarke Cochran, arguing for a distinctly Catholic voice in the arena of healthcare, in which the Catholic Church has long been a primary player, addresses the concerns and responsibilities religious communities have in advocating their particular convictions within a pluralistic society. Among his principles, or "guidelines," for religious participation in public policy discourse, Cochran states, "[religious] communities should be prophetic rather than priestly with regard to the surrounding political culture," and "they are charged to live themselves according to the principles they advocate for the larger polity."<sup>241</sup> In other words, Cochran calls the Church to participate in public discourse authentically from its convictions and to practice what it preaches. Regarding Cochran's distinction of "priestly" and "prophetic" roles, such a distinction can be understood consistently with Newman's and Tillard's arguments as reported in

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Cochran, "Sacrament and solidarity."

the previous chapter. While it would be inappropriate for the Church to exercise 'cultic' or 'hierarchical' authority over a pluralistic society, the role of the 'prophet,' is not only appropriate, it is imperatively authentic. This role requires a strong, well-formed lay voice in society, engaged in policy debate. Connecting these guidelines to the concept of "solidarity," Cochran argues,

The human person is called to relationships of trust, commitment, and sacrifice that burst the boundaries of the political. One implication is that there is a common good beyond the common good of the political community itself.<sup>242</sup>

This statement neatly summarizes not only the role of the Church in the world as an institution, but the role of each disciple as an individual and as a member of the Body of Christ.

Communitarianism describes a vital aspect of ecclesial communion; it establishes the responsibilities of the lay disciple to be a prophetic voice of social advocacy in secular society; and it calls members of the Body of Christ to solidarity and personal contact with each other. Rather than being an opposing force to personalism, the next section will reveal how communitarianism is really a close relative to personalism. The major difference between the two concepts lies mostly in emphasis.

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

## Personalism

Like communitarianism, personalism defies specific definition, even serving as an "anti-ideology" by the estimate of prominent personalists.<sup>243</sup> Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950) is perhaps the foremost personalist philosopher. Mounier's biographer, John Hellman, ascribes personalism's influence on Vatican II and the "New Theologians" who contributed to the Council, particularly Congar, de Lubac, and Chenu, as personalism's greatest contribution.<sup>244</sup> Mounier took a great interest in Congar's work in ecclesiology in which the latter, "described the Mystical Body of Christ as a doctrine stimulating a 'communitarian spirituality,' which negated religious individualism."<sup>245</sup> Mounier established the personalist journal *L'Esprit* in 1932, to which theologian Henri de Lubac contributed greatly by defining sacramentality and communitarianism as key components of personalism.<sup>246</sup> Doyle writes, "For de Lubac, the sacramental form of relationality is the one that ties together the church as the Mystical Body of Christ with the Church as the historical People of God."<sup>247</sup> Appealing to de Lubac's reclaiming of patristic authority, Doyle also states, "De Lubac

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<sup>243</sup> John Hellman, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left: 1930-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 4. Hellman reports that personalist journal editor Domenach specifically rejected the notion of personalism as fitting into a specific definition. James Lawson, "From Mystique to Politique: An Introduction to Personalism," Van Hugel Institute. Center for Study of Faith in Society [website]; available from [www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/vhi/fis/](http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/vhi/fis/). Lawson attributes to Jean LaCroix the definition of personalism as an "anti-ideology."

<sup>244</sup> Hellman, 4.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>247</sup> Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 65.

demonstrated that the individualistic forms of piety often associated with the Eucharist in the modern age had no precedent in the early Church.<sup>248</sup> On a more explicitly personalist note, de Lubac integrally equated the fulfillment of the human person (as an individual) to that of all humanity (collectively).<sup>249</sup> Here, not only is the integral relationship of communitarianism and personalism demonstrated, but de Lubac also utilizes this relationship specifically for explaining the nature of the Church as communion, which is realized both materially and spiritually through the sacraments.

While perhaps defying easy explanation, Mel Piehl gives the following "summary"<sup>250</sup> of personalism as a philosophy, which was originally given by Joseph Amato. First, personalism emphasizes the "primacy of the person as a free and spiritual being."<sup>251</sup> Second, humanity cannot be 'reduced' to "society, politics, and history" alone.<sup>252</sup> Third, personalism respects the physical and social nature of the human person.<sup>253</sup> Fourth, the "metaphysical impulse [of personalism defines] ... a new realism ... recognizing equally [humanity's] spiritual and material nature."<sup>254</sup> Fifth, human "freedom" is rooted within one's

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 68, citing de Lubac's *Catholicism* (1938).

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 70. The quotes are taken from Piehl's use of Joseph Amato, *Mounier and Maritain: A French Understanding of the Modern World* (1975).

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid. This notion defies the various "determinisms" of ideologies, such as Marxist Communism and Secular Humanism.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

own particular historical-political moment.<sup>255</sup> And finally, regarding ethics and politics, an integration or *unity* of "thought and action, person and community, community and historical situation" provides a standard by which public and private elements of society should be judged.<sup>256</sup> Hellman argues that personalism served as an attempt at a "third way," against the extremes of "individualism, and its manifestation, liberal capitalism, and communalism, and its manifestation, communism."<sup>257</sup>

Among the foremost purveyors of personalism was Nikolai Berdyaev, a Russian exile from the Communist Revolution. For him, "Christian idealism was of great practical value in an excessively anxious and materialistic civilization."<sup>258</sup> Berdyaev's two main themes include "Christian freedom and social transformation ... from bourgeois corruption of true social ideals."<sup>259</sup> In other words, Berdyaev would share the communitarian objections to liberalism.<sup>260</sup> Berdyaev personally inspired Mounier to found *L'Esprit*, through which Mounier hoped to lead a permanent social revolution against materialism, bourgeois capitalism, and atheistic communism and to promote "the supremacy of the spirit

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Hellman, 5.

<sup>258</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 73.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Watson, "Liberal Communitarianism." Watson states, "Communitarians seek to foster public spirit and thereby tame the self-interest that liberalism unshackles."

... the rediscovery of the true concept of [humanity.]”<sup>261</sup> In this formulation of the philosophy, which remained focused on the role of the *person*, Mounier described “the person” as “animated by the spiritual, [but] ‘revealed’ in communities.”<sup>262</sup> From a particularly Christian point-of-view, this constitutes a point-of-departure for launching into an understanding of the incarnate presence of Christ in the gathering of disciples, without in any way diminishing the value of the individual as *embodying* the ‘image and likeness of God.’

Amato's summary of personalism above provides guidance for many important guiding principles for this paper, especially regarding 1) the need for balance between the personal and the communal, which is the subject of this section; 2) the role of the ‘historical-political moment’ on the development of the lay apostolate, particularly as it applies to the charismatic leadership of each movement, in their time and culture; and finally, 3) the responsibilities that emanate from the communitarian and personalist nature of the lay apostolate, particularly as it applies to the structures of each movement, the ecclesiastical relationships between Focolare and the Catholic Worker to the institutional Church, and the social witness and service practiced by each movement.<sup>263</sup> These latter points will mostly be examined in the next chapter, once the communitarian-personalist responsibilities are established here. On all of these

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<sup>261</sup> Hellman, 37, 42.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>263</sup> Povilus, 99.

points, applying the Catholic faith to the everyday circumstances of the laity's lives (understood broadly as 'culture') plays an integral role in an effective lay apostolate.

On point #3 above regarding the responsibilities of living in society, Berdyaev writes, "If [the human person] is free, [one] should first consider not the rights thus given [to each] but the obligations freedom involves."<sup>264</sup> On "freedom," Karol Wojtyla (the future John Paul II), in his doctoral work "Person and Act," argues, "self-mastery not self-assertion is the index of a truly human freedom."<sup>265</sup> Berdyaev provides perhaps the best linkage between communitarianism, personalism and communion ecclesiology. Developing his Russian Orthodox concept of "sobornost," which is the 'unity of humanity and God,' Berdyaev argues that God and humanity are brought together by the "organic union of freedom, love and community," idealized by the life the Trinity.<sup>266</sup> Berdyaev, while not always completely orthodox in the Catholic sense,<sup>267</sup> does bring together the personalist "subject-to-subject relationship" between God and the human person, which entails spiritual "solitude" for the person. Such a relationship prevents the individual from being subsumed into collective group

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<sup>264</sup> Donald A. Lowrie, *Rebellious Prophet: A Life of Nicolai Berdyaev* (New York City: Harper and Brothers, 1960), 251.

<sup>265</sup> Lawson, "From Mystique to Politique."

<sup>266</sup> C. S. Calian, *Berdyaev's Philosophy of Hope* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1968), 35, 82; Lowrie, 251.

<sup>267</sup> Lowrie, 239. Lowrie cites an article about Berdyaev that appeared in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore romano*, in which Lowrie describes that the writer found Berdyaev's "Christian conclusions ... acceptable," though he "could not agree" with much of his work.

identity. However, the "essential goal for fullness of life ... [is] sobornost," which is "synonymous" with the 'We' of humanity, joined to God as church.<sup>268</sup>

Serving as a kind of linchpin for holding together communitarianism to personalism is the concept in Catholic social teaching of "subsidiarity." Subsidiarity "holds that political and social activity should be reduced to the most immediate and local context possible."<sup>269</sup> This concept will apply to how both Focolare and the Catholic Worker operate. While recognizing the necessity for larger social structures comprised of smaller more local units, subsidiarity is meant to ensure that no individual is left out of society by providing that person-to-person contact is possible, while larger institutions are only able to provide more generalized, less personalized service.<sup>270</sup> Subsidiarity is a very communitarian principle in the sense that it does not allow local communities to neglect their own, to whom they bear some level of accountability. This responsibility and accountability is reciprocal in the sense that "communities ...enable and encourage individuals to exercise their own self-responsibility."<sup>271</sup> Subsidiarity is essentially personalist, because the principle operates on the

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<sup>268</sup> Calian, 84-85.

<sup>269</sup> David L. Gregory, "Dorothy Day's Lessons on the Transformation of Work," *Hofstra Labor Law Journal* (Fall 1996); The Catholic Worker Movement [website]; available from [www.catholicworker.com/hllj11~](http://www.catholicworker.com/hllj11~). Gregory cites Edward J. O'Boyle, *Homo Socio-Economicus: Foundational to Social Economics and the Social Economy*, 52 Rev. Soc. Econ. 286, 295 n.5 (1994).

<sup>270</sup> Peter J. Henriot, Edward P. DeBeri, and Michael J. Schultheis, *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret*, Centenary ed. (Maryknoll, NY / Washington, DC: Orbis / Center of Concern, 1998), 23.

<sup>271</sup> Gregory, "Dorothy Day's Lessons."

assumption that "the priority of the person [serves] as the origin and purpose of society."<sup>272</sup>

Given the inherent communitarianism in personalism, and vice versa, the task of finding the balance between the two in Focolare and the Catholic Worker is not so much about finding some innovative link as much as it is about elucidating the principles contained in both communitarianism and personalism, then applying those principles to the two movements' examples for lay discipleship. The essential 'balance' to be found is one in which the individual is not found alone, outside of reference to the community, and in which the community does not neglect the value of each member.

The recognition of individualism in modern society as a serious problem and the promotion of a Christian sense of communitarianism are perhaps the closest similarities between Focolare and the Catholic Worker. While one might be tempted to view the movements' form as the obvious reason for this connection, Day and Lubich themselves would ascribe the essence of these values to the nature of Church – both personal and communal – while the movement as a form serves more as a particular expression of ecclesial communion, though not by any means as a mere 'accident.' For Day, the Church serves as a source for much-needed transcendent unity, a "people coming

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

together in a spirit of self-sacrifice to make the world a more caring place in which no one is thrown into the garbage heap."<sup>273</sup>

### Focolare, Communitarianism, and Personalism

Focolare's spirituality exemplifies a balancing act between personal and communal elements, particularly within the unity sought in the concept of 'Jesus in the midst.'<sup>274</sup> For Lubich, contemporary social witness requires the presence of "Jesus in the midst" of his disciples, which entails "group involvement ... participation, and dialogue."<sup>275</sup> Maintaining unity through love, or the 'covenant' shared by all who follow Lubich's charism, entails mutual responsibilities among members to be obedient to the law of love. This was the commitment of the first *focolarine* when they decided to follow Lubich, and following her today requires the "same decision."<sup>276</sup> To illustrate this point, Donald Mitchell argues that Lubich's charismatic unity provides the "means to overcome the field of secular individualism and recover the sense of the sacred as a source of personal as well

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<sup>273</sup> Forest, 155.

<sup>274</sup> Povilus, 52-53. *Focolarini* refer to practical invocations of Matthew 18:20 as the presence of "Jesus in the midst" of those gathered in Christ's name.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., quoting Lubich, *Yes, Yes, No, No* (1977). Lubich writes, "all is contained in the Christianized ideal ... [with Jesus in the midst,] we can be the most exemplary group because we are cells of his Body, the Church." Further, she argues that "participation" is made possible by "unity" that is brought about by "complete love ... giving of our entire selves. Finally, Lubich states that "dialogue" is required, the type of dialogue that is "modeled ... on the life of the Trinity."

<sup>276</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 102-103.

as social transformation."<sup>277</sup> Further, Lubich's notion of unity as a way of life is not foreign to the universal vocation of all Christians, whether or not one chooses to view such a life in the particular terms of Lubich's charism.<sup>278</sup>

Just as Day and Lubich are virtually of the same mind on the nature of the Church as a communion among the members of Christ's Body, the Catholic Worker, while preferring and promoting communitarianism as a social ideal, at no time goes as far as Lubich does on how the individual assents to the community's identity. The following examination of Lubich's concept of "reciprocal nothingness" reveals communitarianism as a particularly radical feature of Focolare, which could be argued as bordering on the 'collective.' It will be shown that the Catholic Worker sought to balance the identity and personal will of the individual with that of the community, to which one must surrender oneself to God's grace for the sake of the common good. However, for Lubich, assenting to the "ecclesial" dimension of sanctity entails a removal of all "subjectivism," yet, like Day, without removing the "personal dimension."<sup>279</sup> Still,

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<sup>277</sup> Mitchell, 182. Mitchell quotes Lubich (source unknown) as stating, "Perhaps the moment has come to discover, illuminate, and edify for God what we could call God's 'exterior castle,' with him spiritually present in the midst of the community."

<sup>278</sup> Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 29, 34. Doyle's comparison of Möhler and Schleiermacher illustrates the debate about whether the essence of ecclesial unity is an 'already' or 'not yet' reality, or both, based on whether or not that unity is constituted either by the charismatic and apostolic nature of the Church (source of mystical unity) or the divisions between ecclesial communities (the consequence of human sin), respectively. In the end, the similarities and differences provide an excellent example of communion ecclesiology as an expression of both unity and diversity, of universality and ecumenical dialogue.

<sup>279</sup> Rosse, 59.

one can detect a tipping of the scales for each movement, Focolare being more concerned about the communal dimension and the Catholic Worker having a primary orientation toward the personal. In fact, in the interest of avoiding any confusion, Archbishop John Foley, head of the Vatican's communications office, advised Lubich to adopt the term "spirituality of communion" to replace the phrase she once used, "collective spirituality."<sup>280</sup> In addition to sacralizing what could be read as a more politically suggestive term, Foley also stated, "for some it [the term 'collective spirituality'] could become an excuse to evade ... personal responsibility."<sup>281</sup> On this score, some effort can be detected by Focolare for achieving greater balance, indeed, embracing communitarian values as a moderation of what might have been initially understood as a true exercise in 'collectivism.'

The removal of all subjectivism through unity is what Lubich refers to as "reciprocal nothingness." This concept is scripturally based, given Lubich's own redaction of Galatians 2:20, which reads, "It is no longer *we* who live but Christ who truly lives in *us*."<sup>282</sup> However, this idea of reciprocal nothingness can also be interpreted as quintessential personalism, as Emmanuel Mounier described the "authentic person" as one who "only finds himself in forgetting, in giving himself –

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<sup>280</sup> Gallagher, 186. No specific date was given for when Lubich received this advice.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., quoting Archbishop Foley.

<sup>282</sup> Rosse, 59, paraphrasing Galatians 2:20. The italics are added to the collective "we" and "us" to indicate how Lubich revised the verse.

the Christian would go to the limit in abandoning himself."<sup>283</sup> To elaborate further on this notion of total self-subsumption, Focolare theologian Guiseppe Zanghi quotes Lubich as stating, "God's idea of a person is God ... My personality ... is Christ in me ... By losing *our* human personality, we acquire that of Christ," who is personality *par excellence*.<sup>284</sup> Zanghi cites Sergio Bulgakov, an Eastern Orthodox theologian, who argues that the original universal man, Adam, did not begin with a self-reflective personality. It was only after the fall did the "total man" become a self-centered individual. The antidote to this fallen state of individualism is the "New Adam," Jesus, who said, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."<sup>285</sup>

Like the Catholic Worker's 'primary' quest or *raison d'être* as a "movement of social change," or "of utopian dissent,"<sup>286</sup> Lubich views Focolare as a "model" for changing society.<sup>287</sup> Lubich stated in 1975, "We are building a society in which others will see and witness that social problems are truly being solved."<sup>288</sup> Yet, Lubich is almost always nonspecific in how the application of 'Jesus in the midst' plays out in practical terms. In her *Spiritual Writings*, volume 11, Lubich states that Jesus in the midst is the "norm of all norms, the premise of every

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<sup>283</sup> Hellman, 83, quoting Mounier.

<sup>284</sup> Guiseppe M. Zanghi, "A Few Notes On Jesus Forsaken," in *An Introduction to the Abba School: Conversations from the Focolare's Interdisciplinary Study Center* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2002), 94, quoting Lubich.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 95, citing Bulgakov and quoting Mark 8:34.

<sup>286</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 242.

<sup>287</sup> Povilus, 97, quoting Lubich from a recording on January 31, 1975.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

other rule in every Christian society."<sup>289</sup> In *Colloquoj*, Lubich states, "We want Christ to triumph in our midst so that one day he might be the single and most genuine expression of our society."<sup>290</sup> Similarly, Emmanuel Mounier promoted the practice of spiritual asceticism over the ethic of industrialization in society. His plan formed a "new, 'dynamic'" sense of "religion ... in communion with the universal élan, Love, the pure presence of God."<sup>291</sup> In this sense, the theoretical and the contemplative consciousness of Christ's presence in society is a priori to the implications that follow. Contributing to the conclusion that Focolare and the Catholic Worker provide a synthesized or complementary model for lay discipleship when examined together, one is led to look at the Catholic Worker's example of faith in action to find a variety of activities that naturally follow, once one's faith is informed by the theoretical foundations of personalism, communitarianism, and communion. However, neither movement is mutually exclusive in terms of modeling both theory and action. Again, like communitarianism and personalism, balancing theory and formation with action becomes a matter of tipping the scales – a matter of degree rather than kind – between Focolare and the Catholic Worker, respectively.

Through Lubich's charism of unity, one is invited to discover Focolare's communal identity, which requires at least "two or three" to 'gather in Christ's

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 97, quoting Lubich, *Spiritual Writings* 11

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., quoting Lubich

<sup>291</sup> Hellman, 44.

name,' which by Christ's own assurance, guarantees his presence.<sup>292</sup> In her book, *When Our Love Is Charity*, Lubich recalls a brief conversation she had with Cardinal Montini (the future Pope Paul VI), which reaches back into the ancient Church as a kind of defense of the spiritual power of burgeoning movements in the Church. Unity in Jesus' presence, by which Montini means a community of disciples, is "more precious than any other treasure ... more than our own souls!"<sup>293</sup> Montini then recalled Gregory of Nazianzen's "farewell address in Constantinople," in which the ancient bishop argued that art and other material treasures never compare to the splendor of a small and simple gathering of disciples in Christ's name.<sup>294</sup> This communitarian nature applies not just to those who join themselves to each other in a particular way by the form of the movement, but it characterizes the whole of Christian communion. Still, the form of the movement itself provides a particular model for understanding how Focolare's unity is lived among its members, the *focolarini*. Such principles can be extracted and adapted as they teach ordinary, universal lessons by extraordinary and particular means.

Focolare leadership and structure are much more clearly defined than that of the Catholic Worker. For one thing, Focolare is bound by statutes, which are

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<sup>292</sup> Matthew 18:20

<sup>293</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 60.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

considered their "Rule." The Catholic Worker has no such formal rule.<sup>295</sup> Emphasizing the distinction between Focolare and the hierarchical Church, Lubich was insistent that despite Focolare's "hierarchical structure," it is not parallel or the same as the structures of the institutional Church.<sup>296</sup> Rather, Focolare, according to its foundress, is more of a "fraternity in charity."<sup>297</sup>

Gallagher writes that though much is written about Lubich in the European press, she "very rarely grants interviews outside Focolare's own media."<sup>298</sup> Interestingly, Elisabeth Dodds, writing for the Protestant journal, *Christian Century* in 1969, provides a rare outsider's glimpse deep inside Focolare's center at that time. She notes that while Lubich was "unmistakable as a charismatic leader," Focolare remained "blithely unhierarchical," according to Dodds' observations, "although functioning within the highly stratified Church of Rome."<sup>299</sup> To illustrate what Dodds observed as Focolare's radical egalitarianism, the correspondent witnessed at Focolare's main center, Loppiano, "a member of the Italian parliament," who was addressed, like everyone else, by his first name, and he was "assigned a mattress on the floor," again like everyone

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<sup>295</sup> Gregory, "Dorothy Day's Lessons." While no claim is ever made of the Catholic Worker having official statutes, in his section on "The Principle of Subsidiarity," Gregory does quote a "mission statement" from Troester, ed., *Voices of the Catholic Worker*, 578-579. Gregory is a professor of law at St. John's University (New York).

<sup>296</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 38.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Gallagher, 215.

<sup>299</sup> Dodds, 910.

else.<sup>300</sup> As noted above, even Lubich describes Focolare's leadership as "hierarchical;" however, Dodds' observations serve to illustrate how, at least from an outsider's perspective, Focolare actively demonstrates equality of dignity among individual members within a hierarchical and communal structure, which can be understood, as Dodds alludes, as a microcosm of the whole Church.

While many joined Lubich in her consecrated life, forming the core of permanent *focolarini*, others followed her without committing their lives to celibate chastity, while still living "the same life of charity and service to the poor."<sup>301</sup> Core members live in community at various "Focolare centers," while other, non-consecrated, members, often referred to as "Volunteers," simply live and work in the secular world, usually while raising families.<sup>302</sup> It was through Igino Giordani that Focolare established its "New Families" and the "New Humanity" (Focolare's inter-religious associates) movements.<sup>303</sup> Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Focolare gradually widened its membership to Christians of other denominations (beyond Catholicism) and other religions (beyond Christianity), as a means of spreading its message of "unity."<sup>304</sup>

Focolare remains a "vital force for both ecumenism and interfaith dialogue," cooperating with the efforts of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid. Dodds could have been referring to Giordani, but she does not name the "member of the Italian parliament."

<sup>301</sup> Gallagher, 31.

<sup>302</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 24.

<sup>303</sup> "Process of Beatification" ZENIT [Website].

<sup>304</sup> Mitchell, 178-179.

Dialogue, led by Francis Cardinal Arinze.<sup>305</sup> Teresa Gonçalves is an official with Cardinal Arinze's curial department, and she deals with issues specific to 'new religious movements.' It is particularly noteworthy that Gonçalves' one model of implementing the Vatican's strategy for inter-religious dialogue, beyond the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue itself, is Focolare.<sup>306</sup> One can hardly read Gonçalves' interpretation of Christian inter-religious dialogue without being reminded of the basic tenets of Focolare's "spirituality of unity."<sup>307</sup> In fact, the conclusion of Gonçalves' article, which is not specifically about Focolare, summarizes how the Catholic Church's "spirituality of dialogue" and Focolare's "spirituality of unity" essentially comprise the same thing.<sup>308</sup> In this sense, Focolare clearly demonstrates an interest – perhaps even a radical interest – in dialogue as a basic component of witnessing to communion in its communitarianism. While such a comparison is beyond the scope of this present study, an historical juxtaposition of Focolare's inter-religious dialogue and the Catholic Worker's pacifism would likely yield further confirmation of the benefits these movements offer the Church and the world.

The other components stated at the outset of this chapter for communitarian movements seeking to witness ecclesial communion included

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid.; Gallagher, 175.

<sup>306</sup> Teresa Osório Gonçalves, "Inter-Religious Encounter: Dialogue and the Search for Unity," *The Ecumenical Review* 52, no. 4 (October 2000), 468-470.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

unity and commitment. These components will be explored next in relation to the structure of Focolare's many branches. Lubich explains that each branch of Focolare (i.e. permanent, core members, the New Humanity Movement, the New Families Movement, etc.) operates differently, yet like branches on a single tree. She states, "they all fit together in unity, like [the colors of] a rainbow."<sup>309</sup> Suggesting that Focolare's structure is an organic outgrowth of divine love, Lubich relates the movement to an embodiment of the unity between the divine persons of the Trinity.<sup>310</sup> This advent reflected for Lubich what Pope Paul VI called "organized charity," or what Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras, with whom Lubich entered into ecumenical dialogue, called "incarnate charity."<sup>311</sup> While unity, of course, is central to Lubich's "charism of unity," this explanation of what the movement is, again, illustrates the unity and the diversity within a movement, which is defined not only by its ecclesiality but by its spirituality, whether it is understood in practical or theological terms.

Focolare is comprised of "compound forms of community life," including "Focolare centers, nuclei, units, new families, and new communities of religious."<sup>312</sup> "Volunteers" are Focolare members grouped into "nuclei," which are

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<sup>309</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 40.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

"small groups"<sup>313</sup> consisting of members from various states of life.<sup>314</sup> These nuclei are "temporary Focolare units,"<sup>315</sup> who live in the world – often with their families – working at diverse occupations, including the priesthood and religious life, and always spreading the movement's "goals" wherever they are.<sup>316</sup> These groupings also apply to "Gen units," each of which is a 'nucleus' of Focolare youth.<sup>317</sup> Nuclei are not necessarily – and usually not – *physical* communities. More often than not they are comprised of "isolated individuals" ('isolated,' that is, from other *focolarini*), who live in "unity of spirit" with other *focolarini*, both in their particular groupings and with the whole movement around the world.<sup>318</sup> Geographically, various nuclei are organized into "zones," which were once led by *capizoni*, or 'zone heads,'<sup>319</sup> although Povilus explains that Lubich did away with this term to emphasize that the "single authority," the "true superior" is always 'Jesus in the midst,' who is now made physically present by representatives from each zone.<sup>320</sup> Each of the men's and women's sections enjoy "equal juridical standing,"<sup>321</sup> again suggesting that some measure of egalitarianism does exist, even within the movement's hierarchy. Getting a

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Urquhart, 166; Povilus, 117.

<sup>320</sup> Povilus, 118.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

handle on the structure of Focolare and its terminology is almost impossible, and one cannot stick too literally to the terms used by any given author, including Lubich herself, because the terminology is not always used consistently and is full of equivalences, for example, 'zone' and 'geographic section' refer to the same thing and a 'unit' in one branch might be a 'zone' in another. From this review of Focolare's complex structuring, what emerges is not only a clearer sense of the formality that constitutes the movement but also measure of subsidiarity involved.

A prime example of subsidiarity in Focolare is how various groupings of *focolarini* are transposed over each other for the sake of not allowing those who do not physically live near other members to be brought into as geographically 'local' a nucleus as possible. This is accomplished through the use of the 'temporary' grouping, which includes those of various states of life (laity, priests, and religious), all of whom belong to their own branch.

The physical Focolare communities are called "little cities," or "Mariopoli" (the plural of Mariopolis), the same name as the mass gatherings of *focolarini*, which are like periodic conventions or rallies.<sup>322</sup> Again, these communities, like the nuclei, can come in various forms and compositions of members. Lubich compares these 'little cities' to the medieval villages of fellow spiritual travelers that orbited monastic communities at the height of Benedictine influence in

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<sup>322</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 67

Europe.<sup>323</sup> Lubich explains her theory of secular and communitarian evangelization by quoting Theodore the Studite, who wrote of these monastic-centered cities, "by your unanimous agreement ... you shine out in these places like unwavering stars shine in the dark night of heresy ... 'a city set on a hill.'"<sup>324</sup> While the synonymously named 'Mariopoli' are distinct by the respective permanence or temporariness of each gathering, *focolarini* do not conceptually distinguish one type of Mariopolis from the other, because both are essentially gatherings of various sizes but always in unity with 'Jesus in the midst' of them.<sup>325</sup> The physical nature of the gathering, in other words, is accidental, whereas the Trinitarian and sacramental unity among members with Christ is an essential state of being or way of living.

The nature of the authority exercised in Focolare, which is real and hierarchical, is always qualified by statements that attempt to express the divinized and mystical authority over the practical leaders, reinforcing the idea noted above that 'true' leadership belongs to the sacramental presence of Jesus in the midst. To give an example of this mystification of leadership roles, Lubich equates Focolare's "organized charity" to the original Church in the Acts of the

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., quoting Theodore the Studite, *Epis. Lib. ii* in *Patrologai Cursus Completus Series Latina*. J.P. Migne, ed. vol. 99 of 221 vols. Paris:1844-1862, 1446.

<sup>325</sup> Povilus, 115-116. Quoting Lubich, who was speaking to "the citizens ... of Loppiano" on March 28, 1972, "the Mariopolis "teaches .... The way to have Christ continually resurrect among all of you ... the specific vocation of the Mariopolis is an anticipation of the heavenly Jerusalem ... [where] God lives among his people" (citing Rev. 21:2-4).

Apostles (as "apostolic and equalitarian") and to the "communion of saints" (as based on "wisdom, prudence, and generosity").<sup>326</sup>

Lubich explains that the headquarters of Focolare serves as a kind of mystically magnetic epicenter, pulling the whole movement into loving unity.<sup>327</sup> The leadership includes Lubich, as president, and her assistant,<sup>328</sup> who is referred to as the "co-president."<sup>329</sup> The concept of co-leaders emanates from the belief that it takes at least two to be gathered in Christ's name to have his presence in their midst and apostolic sending out of disciples 'two by two.' The "Coordinating Council" consists of representatives from all of the various branches and "vocations."<sup>330</sup> Also represented on the Council are the various "geographic centers," or "zones," which Lubich describes as the "offspring of charity."<sup>331</sup> Regarding those who will succeed her, Lubich states, "at the moment of my death, I would in no way want to leave the Work of Mary in the hands of one person alone, but rather to Jesus in the midst of two persons."<sup>332</sup> Again, this notion of ultimate authority as Christ's sacramental presence is brought up, but here, it is invoked in the form of succeeding Lubich.

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<sup>326</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 26-27.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> Povilus, 118.

<sup>330</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 40.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>332</sup> Povilus, 118, quoting Lubich from a recording on June 1, 1969.

The Coordinating Council, Lubich insists, must be unanimous in making their final decisions.<sup>333</sup> The unanimity or 'perfect mutual understanding' expected of Focolare's governing body can only be understood in the context of the radical self-denial and total self-giving love, or agape, that is essential to understanding and manifesting the charism of unity.

Judith Povilus calls Lubich's notion of leadership within her movement "enlightened obedience."<sup>334</sup> Explaining this leadership style, Lubich states,

The superior, with detachment ... expresses what the subordinate must do ... The subordinate, with detachment, expresses the personal difficulties that come into play which may indicate that God's will is another ... The superior then ... interprets the desire of Jesus in the their midst which will result not only as to the liking of the subordinate (to his or her new self), but also as the only road to take.<sup>335</sup>

The goal of this decision making process, which is rooted in a distinction of roles but also a unity of purpose, appears to be the achievement of consensus, where input and mutual listening are valued. The end result must be a discerned expression of objective truth, not a negotiated or circumstantial reality. Quoting Lubich, Povilus states, "putting aside one's idea's 'does not mean to renounce them, but to offer them.'"<sup>336</sup> Subsidiarity is evidenced here again, because the "superior" to "subordinate" relationship is exercised person-to-person within the more 'local' units. Fr. Enzo Fondi reports that formation within the movement is

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<sup>333</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 40.

<sup>334</sup> Povilus, 119-120, quoting Lubich.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid., quoting Lubich, "*L'Ordine di Maria e il suo Ideale*."

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

community-oriented and that it "concentrates ... on the environment of formation."<sup>337</sup> Dodds reports, without any hint of skepticism, that *focolarini* are able to maintain their sense of authoritarian-free environment, because they enjoy a spontaneous unanimity, or what the members call, a "common mind."<sup>338</sup>

Fondi argues that the communion, or love in unity, shared by Focolare members inspires them to avoid the formation of cliques and exclusive relationships.<sup>339</sup> The analogy he draws to illustrate this point also conveys the Eucharistic character of the movement, which also recalls de Lubac's idea of communitarian sacramentality. Fondi states that each *focolarino* is like a "fragment of the consecrated host which contains the entire Jesus," while the movement itself is the unbroken host, a complete image of the Church.<sup>340</sup> Povilus explains that it is Jesus "who forms unity," and it is Christ who "is the result of unity," remaining present in the "mutual cancellation of our egos."<sup>341</sup> Skeptics could easily interpret Focolare's claims of unanimity as authoritarian, even autocratic. However, given the complex structure of zones and branches, there is little doubt that participation in the inner-workings of the movement is not in short supply. The innovative structure of governance that Focolare follows can

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<sup>337</sup> Fondi, 46.

<sup>338</sup> Dodds, 910.

<sup>339</sup> Fondi, 53-54.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>341</sup> Povilus, 16.

really only be described as transcendent. Judith Povilus quotes Lubich, who describes Focolare as

a perfect democracy in the equality of the Children of God ... all authority comes from above ... we are freedom and unity ... our life is a reflection on earth of the life of the Holy Trinity.<sup>342</sup>

Such a leadership structure likely strikes the outsider as unrealistically perfectionist, especially in the demand for unanimity. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this project, Focolare's leadership structure demonstrates concern for the individual, allowing for feedback to one's superior while prayerfully seeking consensus. There is also due consideration for the common good, and they clearly account for subsidiarity, with hierarchical checks-and-balances.

### The Catholic Worker, Communitarianism, and Personalism

Bridging the divide between the "traditional Catholic view of community and authority" and "American libertarianism and individualism" posed perhaps the most fundamental challenge that Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker faced in its development.<sup>343</sup> American history, Day recognized, was rooted in "action and dissent."<sup>344</sup> Mel Piehl argues that Day's balancing act between traditional Catholicism and her American social context led her to take the particularly Catholic "stance" akin to the "pre-Reformation reformer," one who called the

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<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 100, quoting Lubich, from a recording on June 3, 1969.

<sup>343</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 93-94.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

Church back to the authenticity of its earliest traditions.<sup>345</sup> On the other side of the coin, the more typically American side, she remained "completely tolerant and ecumenical, without a trace of triumphalism."<sup>346</sup>

Day and Maurin, sought to apply a synthesis of "Christian personalism" and "socioeconomic reform."<sup>347</sup> In this sense, they sought to bring together the incarnate and prophetic witness of humanity's redemption with a very practical sense of social and personal responsibility in the everyday lives of ordinary working people. The influence of European personalism and other intellectual strains emanating from across the Atlantic permeated the inception and development of the Catholic Worker as both a Catholic and peculiarly American movement, without being an Americanist movement. For example, against the American notion of "religion as ... a private or personal affair,"<sup>348</sup> Europeans in the 1950s still assumed that a "vital relation [between religion and] the public lives of people" continued to exist with "serious social consequences."<sup>349</sup> From the personalist Mounier, the Catholic Worker, particularly through Peter Maurin, embraced to some extent the "commitment to a new religious civilization" – brought about by "revolution" – to "preserve traditional values."<sup>350</sup> Among those

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<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> O'Connor and King, 131.

<sup>348</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 246, citing William Phillips, "Religion and the Intellectuals." *Partisan Review* 17 (1950), 326, 481.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 70.

who taught as guest lecturers in the Catholic Worker's early 'workers' school' were the personalist Jacques Maritain and the English distributist, Hilaire Belloc.<sup>351</sup> Distributists, like G.K. Chesterton, Eric Gill, Vincent McNabb, and Belloc promoted the notion of a neo-medieval, "anti-capitalist, anti-industrialist, and anti-statist" economic order, which in turn, inspired Maurin's call for a "Green Revolution" back to the land.<sup>352</sup>

Anthony Novitsky takes a very strong position, largely based on Maurin's distributist and personalist views, that Maurin leaned the Catholic Worker intellectually to the "reactionary" right, rather than toward the "New Catholic Left," as is often assumed by those who associate the movement with the anti-war activism of Ammon Hennacy.<sup>353</sup> Michael Baxter, while not confirming Novitsky's "reactionary" label, does emphatically deny the claim that the Catholic Worker is "liberal," stating,

You know the Catholic Worker is not a liberal movement. It is a radical movement, and there's a sharp difference. Liberals say, "Hey! The homeless aren't being fed. Let's march on the city hall." Radicals say, "Hey! The homeless aren't being fed. Let's feed them."<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness* (San Francisco: Harper, [1952] 1997), 56. Day defines "Distributism" as "that society whereby man has sufficient of the world's goods to enable him to have a good life." She also includes the terms "mutualism, federalism, pluralism, [and] regionalism" as synonymous terms.

<sup>352</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 71.

<sup>353</sup> Anthony Novitsky, "Peter Maurin's Green Revolution: The Radical Implications of Reactionary Social Catholicism," *The Review of Politics* 37 (January 1975), 83-84, 96, 103. Novitsky was a scholar of counter-cultural American politics and press. He donated his papers on the "alternative press," especially relating to the anti-Vietnam campus student unrest of the 1960s to the archives of the University at Buffalo (SUNY).

<sup>354</sup> Troester, ed., *Voices of the Catholic Worker*, 516.

The claim of the Catholic Worker's "conservatism" or "liberalism" is not unique. Bill Kauffman of the American Enterprise Institute (a conservative think-tank) has written multiple essays,<sup>355</sup> citing Novitsky, claiming the Catholic Worker for the "American Right." However, Piehl, Robert Coles and Patrick Jordan (a *Commonweal* editor) collectively refute Kauffman's claim, arguing that Kauffman's work is 'selective' (Jordan) and "potentially misleading" (Piehl).<sup>356</sup> All of the Kauffman's detractors claim that Day had plenty of criticism for all sides of American politics, but Jordan's explanation of the Catholic Worker's *Catholicism* seems the most poignant in putting to rest any clear labeling of the movement as belonging to a particular ideology. Jordan argues that "Catholic Worker" is both semantically and conceptually opposite of "American Enterprise" (Kauffman's association), because, "Catholic" implies a universalist and sacramental understanding of the human condition (in Christ, we are all members of one body), and is not tied to the fortunes of a particular state."<sup>357</sup> While denying any all-encompassing 'conservatism' or 'liberalism,' Jordan and Piehl both invoke the Catholic Worker's personalism and communitarianism, respectively.

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<sup>355</sup> Patrick Jordan, Mel Piehl, and Robert Coles, "Dorothy Day: Neocon Saint?" *Commonweal* (January 12, 1996), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library](http://www.highbeam.com/library). Cf. Bill Kauffman, "Saint Dorothy" *American Enterprise* (November/December 1995) and Bill Kauffman, "'The Way of Love' – Dorothy Day and the American Right," in *Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays*, ed. Phillip Runkel William Thorn, and Susan Mountin (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001).

<sup>356</sup> Jordan, Piehl and Coles, "Dorothy Day: Neocon Saint?"

<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

Analyzing the agrarian ideals of the Catholic Worker, specifically of Maurin, Eugene McCarragher's description of Maurin's Green Revolution is rife with both personalist and communitarian overtones. McCarragher states,

Since property ... was a social space for creative work – work that could be creative only when hand and brain [i.e. by worker-scholars], production and planning, were indissoluble incarnations of God's own image and likeness – proprietorship was a social trust defined and regulated in religious terms ... a "liturgical economy."<sup>358</sup>

Further confirming his point, McCarragher quotes Dorothy Day, who stated, "a man who works with his hands as well as with his head is an integrated personality."<sup>359</sup> From this personal integration, Day continues, people can gain "a sense of the sacramentality of life,"<sup>360</sup> which is God's presence as a coworker with the person, who participates in God's creative act. Recalling Bulgakov's and Berdyaev's analyses of personality and freedom as a call to *sobornost*, both Russians provide an excellent context for understanding the essential value of the individual, who is alone with God, while paradoxically called to live for others. The Catholic Worker clearly applies transcendent values by bringing them to earth and challenging people not only to faith but also to charity and responsibility.

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<sup>358</sup> McCarragher, *Christian Critics: Religion and the Impasse in Modern American Social Thought*, 85.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

The practical application of the Catholic Worker's communitarian personalist balancing act began with Maurin's application of the "common good" in the realm of socio-economics, which involved "manageable [cooperatives] of proper size" and facilitating individual "personal responsibility."<sup>361</sup> This is an example of the Catholic Worker's belief and practice of subsidiarity by encouraging individual participation and input, while keeping governance and economic management both local, personal, and communitarian. At the same time, Day invoked St. Gertrude, who declared, "Property, the more common it is, the more holy it becomes."<sup>362</sup> In other words, to truly recognize the dignity and need for empowerment of each individual, it became vital that no model put forward allow anyone to get 'lost in the crowd.' The real-world model that most impressed Maurin, Day reports, were the kibbutzim of what is now modern Israel, which bore the characteristics of being "cooperative, collective, communal state farms ... [that were] voluntarily undertaken."<sup>363</sup> In these cooperative communities of Jewish pioneers, Catholic Worker recognized hints of an emerging "new synthesis," where working the land and living an intentionally communitarian social philosophy, based on a radical view of the Judeo-Christian tradition, seemed increasingly possible.<sup>364</sup> Such "communities of work" appeared to

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<sup>361</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 208.

<sup>362</sup> Jordan, Piehl and Coles, "Dorothy Day: Neocon Saint?"

<sup>363</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 47-48.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

present a solution to the exploitation of the workers in modern mass industry, quoting Day, by means of "land for the landless, true farming communes, cooperatives and credit unions," all of which she described as "wild, prophetic and holy."<sup>365</sup>

To illustrate the personal nature of the Catholic Worker's collective spirit, those who lived in the "primitive" apartments outside of the main "St. Joseph's House of Hospitality" (on Chrystie Street in the early 1960s) in New York, were referred to by Day as "the family."<sup>366</sup> According to Day, the Catholic Worker was "not a community of saints but a rather slipshod group of individuals who were trying to work out certain principles – the chief of which was an analysis of man's freedom."<sup>367</sup> Here, Day reveals another very important theme, the practical success and failure of the movement's activities, or at least living up to their expectations, as opposed to the effectiveness and tenacious consistency of the Catholic Worker's prophetic social witness. The movement experienced a number of serious setbacks during World War II as a result of the loss of volunteer personnel to military enlistment and internal disagreements over pacifism, opposition to the war, and to the draft. Coupled with the alleviation of unemployment from war production, the scale of the movement decreased, as their radical and pacifist stands were no longer in vogue. Yet, Day's dedication

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<sup>365</sup> Forest, 123.

<sup>366</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 194.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

to the community and to her radical convictions remained as strong as ever, as this most serious test of her leadership proves.<sup>368</sup>

In August of 1940, Day wrote a letter to all of the Catholic Worker houses, which became known, according to Sicius, as "Dorothy's Encyclical."<sup>369</sup> In the letter, Day stated that pacifism would be the definitive position of the Catholic Worker movement. Other Catholic Worker leaders, like Cogley (Chicago) and H.A. Reinhold (Seattle) took particular exception to Day's "dictator's methods."<sup>370</sup> The various leaders then attended a retreat at the Catholic Worker farm in Easton, Pennsylvania, where Day's retreat director, Fr. Hugo, tried to solidify the peace position.<sup>371</sup> The "Easton retreat," instead of rallying the two sides of the movement further divided it and led to the closure of Cogley and Sullivan's Blue Island Avenue house and the *Chicago Catholic Worker* newspaper.<sup>372</sup> With a few notable exceptions, many Catholic Workers joined the armed services. The notable exceptions declared 'conscientious objector' ("CO") status and spent the

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<sup>368</sup> Forest, 83-84.

<sup>369</sup> Sicius, 118-119, quoting Reinhold.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid., 120-121.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid. It appears Sicius might have used Day's autobiography, *The Long Loneliness* as his guide for the historical facts on the pacifist controversy. Sandra Yocum Mize of the University of Dayton placed Fr. Paul Hanley Furfey and Fr. Roy Pacifique at the Easton retreat, while Hugo apparently led the second retreat in 1941 in Oakmont, Pennsylvania. *The Long Loneliness* is Sicius' likely source, because Mize indicates, "Day's accounts of 'the retreat' in the *Long Loneliness*, like the rest of the narrative provides little chronological precision ... a combination of the reflections of Father Roy and Father Hugo." Sandra Yocum Mize, "We Are Still Pacifists": Dorothy Day's Pacifism During World War II," in *Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays*, ed. Phillip Runkel and Susan Mountin William Thorn (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001), 469-470.

war in CO camps and at other government assigned projects.<sup>373</sup> Day went on a self-imposed sabbatical to pray for all of the Catholic Workers, either in the military or in the CO camps, though she never flinched from her position on pacifism, and as noted above, her sabbatical was short-lived.<sup>374</sup>

The themes of being 'in control' and 'not in control' of the Catholic Worker movement appear to have been a constant struggle for Day, as much of her writing shows. Citing Galatians 5<sup>375</sup> as the basis for a Pauline sense of anarchism and social service, Day favored a spiritual ideal of personal autonomy, over defined titles of authority and power.<sup>376</sup> She applied this notion to the Catholic Worker in renouncing any title of authority for herself and by encouraging self-responsibility among the movement's adherents. Still, Catholic Worker houses continued to seek her guidance for "organization" and structure, as if she were the director, though she insisted, "we have to emphasize personal responsibility at all costs."<sup>377</sup> Day claims to have suffered from the assumption of

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<sup>373</sup> Sicius, 120-121.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>375</sup> Day, *Selected Writings*, 343. Day writes, "Those who have given up all ideas of domination and power ... are 'not under the law.'" Galatians 5:6, states, "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love." Galatians 5:18, reads, "But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law."

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 342-343. Galatians 5:13, "For you were called freedom ... But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love."

<sup>377</sup> Ibid., 74.

her leadership, stating, "I am just in the position of a dictator trying to legislate himself out of existence."<sup>378</sup>

Day would often qualify her position statements by making it emphatically clear that she only spoke for herself, as with her attitude toward ecclesiastical authority in relation to the movement. The following example illustrates this point. Regarding her statement that she would obey the Archbishop of New York if he asked her to stop publishing *The Catholic Worker*, Day writes,

Perhaps I had no right to speak for more rebellious souls than mine ...  
Perhaps I have sounded too possessive about *The Catholic Worker* itself  
and had no right to speak for the publication.<sup>379</sup>

Another example of this leadership theme deals with her relations with other Catholic Worker houses. While she might have claimed to be a dictator trying to work herself out of that job, at other times, she displayed the singular decisiveness of a dictator, as the pacifist debate of the 1940s illustrates.

Despite her definite sense of humility about her leadership role, Jim Forest argues that Day exercised decisive leadership, stating, "she alone could lay down the law."<sup>380</sup> To illustrate the level of influence her words held for Catholic Workers, Forest recalls that whenever she would leave the New York house on a speaking tour or to advise another Catholic Worker community, factions within the New York house would invoke Day's aphorisms or quote her columns to

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<sup>378</sup>Ibid.

<sup>379</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>380</sup> Forest, 152.

bolster their positions in disputes, essentially using her words as ammunition.<sup>381</sup>

On the issue of leadership, Day and Peter Maurin did not see eye-to-eye. Maurin, according to Day, preferred "the Benedictine manner," which included only one leader, the abbot in the case of the monastery, who holds absolute authority, which is due to him from the esteem he enjoys among his fellow monks.<sup>382</sup> Day attributed her differences with Maurin on leadership to gender differences. The main point of focus for men, according to Day, dealt in "the future" and over "more abstract" concepts, such as Maurin's "romantic" vision for an agrarian revolution and society. On the other hand, Day argued that women are more present-oriented, "solving immediate practical problems,"<sup>383</sup> like focusing on the plight of workers today and asking how their existing conditions might be improved, given that they really had no ambition for going back to the farm anytime soon. In this respect, Day admitted, "As for the paper itself – I am in charge of that."<sup>384</sup> Forest refers to Day as the "final arbiter of conflict" in the movement.<sup>385</sup> Still, Day highly respected and essentially adopted Maurin's vision.<sup>386</sup>

The pacifist debate throughout World War II and later into the Cold War hurt the Catholic Worker, especially as it experienced transitional growing pains.

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<sup>381</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>382</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 137.

<sup>383</sup> Forest, 61.

<sup>384</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 137.

<sup>385</sup> Forest, 80.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid., 61.

From the Depression through World War II and into the Cold War, the Catholic Worker evolved from a much needed social service to the poor and the unemployed, which gave the movement a credible – some might say even ‘popular’ – public position from which to spread its philosophy, to become a more marginal – even unpopular – voice that both officially opposed the most popular war in American history and America’s triumphal position as the world’s leading anti-communist crusader and post-war superpower. Unlike other so-called ‘utopian’ experiments, the Catholic Worker “was remarkably successful over a long period in avoiding loss of identity, isolation or authoritarian leadership.”<sup>387</sup> Piehl attributes this consistency of mission to “the strength of Day’s leadership [which] was exercised as much through her role as spiritual writer and exemplar as through her position as head of the movement.”<sup>388</sup>

Piehl argues that Day preferred a more “homelike ... revolution,” which might be considered more American in influence by not neglecting the role of the individual, over the ‘masses,’ or the concrete needs of people today, over “the abstract and impersonal cause.”<sup>389</sup> Certainly, again, the intentional value and practice of subsidiarity is reflected in such statements and in her very personal writing style. Despite decades of performing works of mercy, Dorothy Day claimed to suffer a “depression” over the seeming futility of attempting to make

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<sup>387</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 243.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid., 80.

progress, stating, "I'm afraid we are still individualistic, not communitarian."<sup>390</sup>

Perhaps the lesson to be taken away here for the contemporary disciple is that there is a definite price to be paid for following up one's spirituality with a definitive program of action. Often, that price can be self-doubt, something the reader of Dorothy Day is subjected to constantly, while the reader of Chiara Lubich never even gets a hint of uncertainty. At the same time, Day herself bemoans the feeling of "futility," which she recognizes as being among the "great evils of the day."<sup>391</sup> Rather, returning to her comment cited above that one must rely on God's grace, she continues by asserting that God will 'multiply' the "increase" of "love in our hearts ... as Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes."<sup>392</sup> So significant is this point for Day that the title of the book in which she wrote this reflection was called *Loaves and Fishes*.

The Catholic Worker, while maintaining a strict practice of avoiding merely political aims and maintaining strict loyalty to Catholic tradition, served as a bridge between the largely immigrant Catholic minorities and the dominant Protestant and secular liberal cultures of the U.S. This bridge-building was made possible in part by the movement's own peculiarities, but the leadership role of Dorothy Day cannot be underestimated, largely because of her background as a socialist radical convert to Catholicism, who was raised in the dominant American

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<sup>390</sup> Forest, 132.

<sup>391</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 176.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid.

cultural milieu.<sup>393</sup> On this subject, Day herself recalled the views expressed to her by long-time Catholic Worker, Stanley Vishnewski, who, according to Day's memory, found converts to be "rash and reckless in our radical stands ... in our pacifism and our anarchism."<sup>394</sup> To this assessment, Day adds, "we are used to being the dominating ones, not subject to others."<sup>395</sup> Similarly, the Catholic Worker, though unique in its Catholicism, shares in the long American tradition of "utopian ... alternative social models."<sup>396</sup>

Among the examples of this counter-tradition rooted within the dominant cultural landscape of early American society, Piehl cites the Shakers, Brook Farm and the Oneida community,<sup>397</sup> and among the characteristics these intentional and experimental communities share, Piehl lists the following: 1) "disaffection with the larger society;" 2) the attempt to create "enclaves ... as alternative social models;" 3) a particular emphases on "personal freedom and dignity;" 4) "economic communism" (but not political Communism, i.e. Leninist Marxism); 5) "social equality;" 6) "nonmaterial values;" 7) "smaller scale social relations," or localism; and 8) "closer relations with nature."<sup>398</sup> Throughout this chapter, examples of how the Catholic Worker embodied all of these traits have been shown. The Catholic Worker has exemplified each of the traits above

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<sup>393</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 140.

<sup>394</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 144.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 242.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid., 242.

through the following examples: 1) disaffection through its opposition of the societal structures that make war and impoverish workers both morally and materially; 2) alternative enclaves through houses of hospitality and farming communes; and emphasis on 3) freedom and dignity by serving the poor without judgment of how they got there; 4) economic communism by voluntarily sharing in the poverty of those with whom they served; 5) social equality, again, by walking side-by-side with the down-and-out in their suffering; 6) nonmaterial values through Catholicism as their driving mission; 7) localism through personal, one-on-one service, which is against the modern state's impersonal structures of charity; and 8) Maurin's agrarian, distributist "Green Revolution" appealed strongly to virtuous living on the land. Day and Maurin favored self-governance by small, local communities, and they advocated moving closer to nature through the various farming experiments that embrace a kind of pastoral lifestyle over the depersonalized modern industrial city. The next chapter will deal with those issues surrounding the Catholic Worker's radical social witness, especially its advocacy for justice in labor and their efforts to promote agrarianism. The analysis of those issues will seek to show how the Catholic Worker, along with Focolare, have demonstrated and provide models for integrating the Catholic faith into the everyday lives of lay disciples by addressing social and cultural

issues, which can lead the Church into a more fulfilling, lived expression of ecclesial communion.

### Summary of Chapter Two

This chapter has reviewed the exemplification of communitarianism and personalism in Focolare and the Catholic Worker. In short, communitarianism refers to the pursuit of the common good through the solidarity of a group. Commitment to the vision of the movement, unity with the mission of the Church, and dialogue with those both within and outside the Church are all essential components to this pursuit. Communitarianism calls each person to positive participation in the community through the personal responsibility that flows from personal freedom. Personalism is understood as a philosophy that acknowledges the fundamental dignity and spiritual value of the individual. However, personalism is inherently communitarian, because it calls the free individual to personal responsibility, rather than isolated liberty. The concept of subsidiarity largely holds a communitarian and personalist social organization together by valuing the more local forms of function and governance. Subsidiarity allows each member the opportunity to offer a valuable and responsible contribution, rather than getting lost in the impersonal nature of larger institutions. These terms have been applied here not in political terms but

in how they apply to ecclesial communion, offering a faith-based vision of living virtuously and justly.

The unity and distinction inherent to communion possesses both communitarian and personalist principles. Communion is communitarian, because it calls the Body of Christ to solidarity and unity in her vocation to holiness and mission to salvation. Solidarity is rooted in charity, necessitating that a special emphasis is placed on the inclusion of those who are dispossessed. Therefore, Focolare and the Catholic Worker have emphasized charitable service, a preferential option to the poor and a commitment to dialogue with the 'other' and the 'outsider.' Communion is also personalist, because each person is made in the image of God and by one's baptism, each disciple is immersed in and joins oneself to Christ's redemptive mission, to the Church and to humanity. This person-to-person unity entails both profound blessings but also the responsibility to prophetically witness to charity and justice in society.

As shown above, Focolare and the Catholic Worker offer complementary models by applying essentially the same principles with a difference in emphasis on each. Through their very formal structure and leadership; their concept of unity with each other by consciously invoking Jesus in the midst; and their concept of self-emptying love for the sake of the community, or reciprocal nothingness, Focolare clearly places more of their focus on the group's identity

and common good. In this sense, Focolare is clearly more communitarian than the Catholic Worker, though Focolare also does not neglect the value and contributive role of each individual.

The Catholic Worker, on the other hand, struggled to maintain their solidarity at times, though they tenaciously sought to foster a communal spirit, particularly by rallying around Day's leadership and Maurin's communitarian social ideals. However, the appeal to following one's conscience and integrating one's whole self, mind, body and spirit, is very strong in the Catholic Worker. Day both exercised strong leadership at times over the movement, while always emphasizing personal responsibility. Influenced as well by nineteenth century American 'utopian experiments,' the Catholic Worker sought to address the injustices present in their contemporary world, which dehumanized the workers and their society. By examining their integration faith and the everyday aspects of life, like work and advocacy for workers, the Catholic Worker, like their European personalist mentors, sought to bring about a "new religious civilization," one where humanity is freedom to love one another, to cooperate and to make a contribution to society by self-giving and by relying on the grace of God, living and active in the Church and in the everyday world.

## CHAPTER III

### Focolare, the Catholic Worker, and the Lay Apostolate – Integrating Faith and Culture

#### The separation of faith and culture

John Paul II persistently decried the separation of faith and culture in western civilization during his pontificate.<sup>399</sup> The last pope described this modern “cultural crisis” as a battle between spirituality and the “dehumanization” of “secular societies.”<sup>400</sup> Even as far back as 1950, attendees of the *Partisan Review*’s symposium on “Religion and the Intellectuals” concluded that there seems to be little distinction between the lifestyles of religiously committed Americans and those who do not profess a religion.<sup>401</sup> Even though he makes his claim in the context of criticizing both John Paul II and the ecclesial

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<sup>399</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, Papal Encyclical Letter (August 6, 1993), #26. John Paul II states, “No damage must be done to the *harmony between faith and life: the unity of the Church* is damaged not only by Christians who reject or distort the truths of faith but also by those who disregard the moral obligations to which they are called by the Gospel (cf. 1 Cor 5:9-13).” David L. Schindler, “Introduction: Toward a New Unity of the Disciplines,” in *In An Introduction to the Abba School: Conversations from the Focolare’s Interdisciplinary Study Center* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2002), 14, quoting Hans Urs von Balthasar, who argues, “the most fundamental problem of our age” is the “tendency in the West to separate intelligence – the contents and methods of our knowledge of the cosmos – from the order of holiness.”

<sup>400</sup> Gonçalves, 465, quoting John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* #38.

<sup>401</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 246.

movements, Gordon Urquhart acknowledges that in the ecclesial movements and new communities, John Paul II found his "new battalions in the global culture wars," ultimately challenging the secularization of culture.<sup>402</sup> Further, Urquhart asserts that the Vatican holds out high hopes that the movements will serve as an effective frontline in 'solving' various crises in the Church, including the shortage of priests and providing a model for applying contemplative spirituality to promote "justice and peace."<sup>403</sup> Confirming Urquhart's argument, Lubich herself attributes 'Jesus in the midst' as the "bond of Christians [which] will resolve all social problems in charity and truth."<sup>404</sup> Further, Lubich cites John 17:11 ('that they may be one') as the inspiration by which Focolare and all the faithful can seek justice, though its ultimate realization must wait for the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.<sup>405</sup> Even in American parishes, James Davidson and his Catholic Pluralism Project colleagues found that Catholics are likely to integrate a Catholic "worldview" when they feel more included in the life of the Church and when their Catholic 'self-concept' is nurtured pastorally.<sup>406</sup> Whether their sense

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<sup>402</sup> Urquhart, viii.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid., 12. Urquhart's criticism on these points are the reasons he ascribes to the movements as the source of their favor with the Vatican. These reasons, according to Urquhart, include that the movements are "conservative to the point of fundamentalism," and because they promote what the author calls "absolutist moral values."

<sup>404</sup> Povilus, 16, quoting Lubich in the Italian magazine *Amico Serafico* (January 1948).

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> James D. Davidson, et al., *The Search for Common Ground: What Unites and Divides Catholic Americans*, Introduction by Dean Hoge (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1997), 70. On p. 51, Davidson, et. al. defines a "Catholic worldview" as "a system of ideas and actions forming a coherent whole and standing over against competing worldviews ... [which] implies that

of identity and affiliation comes from a parish or a movement, many believe that a complete Christian life demands an integration of faith and culture. However, contrary to what many in the Church may believe about the state of 'separation' and secularization, the Catholic Pluralism Project concluded that American Catholics already "share a rather loosely integrated worldview."<sup>407</sup> This is a sign of hope, which suggests that the seeds are already sown and ready for a fertile and 'new' evangelization.

Canon 225 states that the laity have a "special duty to imbue and perfect the order of temporal affairs."<sup>408</sup> The previous section of the canon states,

the laity ... are deputed by God to the apostolate through baptism and confirmation ... they are therefore bound by the general obligations and enjoy the general right to work ... so that the divine message of salvation becomes known and accepted by all throughout the world.<sup>409</sup>

The effect of Canon 225 is to affirm the laity's 'deputation' from God in the sacraments and to affirm what Yves Congar referred to as the laity's "genuine autonomy and freedom of initiative."<sup>410</sup> Aurelie Hagstrom states that any

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beliefs and practices are based on a set of consistent principles and follow logically from one another."

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>408</sup> Hagstrom, 113, quoting CIC #225.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid., 113, quoting CIC #225. This canon clearly brings together 1) the ecclesial identity of the baptized and fully initiated; 2) the everyday circumstances in which most lay people live and ascribes to them a natural dignity to participate in their social situation through 'work' (broadly understood); 3) and holds out the ultimate fulfillment, "salvation," within that same earthly locus.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 119; Yves Congar, *Christians Active in the World* (New York City: Herder and Herder, 1968), 67.

temptation such autonomy may present to dichotomize the spiritual and temporal can be avoided if the laity "do not separate their professed faith from their daily lives."<sup>411</sup> This integration demands ongoing and lifelong faith formation, through the guidance of the Magisterium, and while the participation of the laity has become essential to the internal ministries of the Church, the laity's primary role is to bring the gospel out of the parish hall and into the home and marketplace.

Gerard Foley argues that intentionally viewing one's work and state of life (i.e. married, vowed celibate, or single) as a calling *from God*, or "vocation," 'critically links' both "faith and work."<sup>412</sup> To adequately facilitate a collective consciousness for intentional vocational discernment and other activities necessary for such an integration, two things must happen in the Church.<sup>413</sup> The first thing that the Church can do is to foster catechetical programs that affirm and celebrate the ordinary work people do in the secular world, which has spiritually redemptive value, versus merely emphasizing the more heroic or

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<sup>411</sup> Hagstrom, 117, 143.

<sup>412</sup> Foley, 80.

<sup>413</sup> Murnion, 26-27; William V. D'Antonio et. al., *American Catholic Laity in a Changing Church* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1989), 9; Foley, 150. Murnion describes the Church's support of the laity in the workplace as "very tentative" and inconsistent, as the history of Church support for unions is betrayed by the prevalence of episcopal opposition to the unionization of ecclesiastical institutions, like schools, hospitals and cemeteries. D'Antonio and his colleagues point to the same inconsistency. William D'Antonio is the former Executive Secretary and President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion; James Davidson is a sociologist specializing in religion at Purdue University; Dean Hoge is a sociologist of religion at Catholic University of America; and Ruth Wallace is a sociologist of feminism, gender and the Church.

prophetic and internally ecclesiastical witness.<sup>414</sup> Droel and Pierce, as well as Foley, offer a second task for the Church, namely, to minister to the laity as the 'church of the workers.' Droel and Pierce warn against the duality of "Sunday morning" worship and the activities of the "rest of the week."<sup>415</sup> Additionally, Foley argues,

The way we live and work together ... [or] everyday relatedness ... is the first and most important way of ministry ... where the servanthood of Christ first becomes visible.<sup>416</sup>

To illustrate how this type of ministry might look within a parish, Phillip Murnion offers the suggestion that ecclesial ministers ought to honor parishioners, not just for their monetary contributions to the Church or for serving in a parish ministry, but for their "artistic achievement, innovative efforts in the workplace, or [for] leadership in ... education, health, or other sectors of the public arena."<sup>417</sup> The history of the lay apostolate in the twentieth century sheds light on how these pastoral issues speak to the view that faith-culture integration is essential to the proper ordering of the apostolic mission of the Church in light of ecclesial communion.

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<sup>414</sup> William L. Droel and Gregory F. Augustine Pierce, *Confident and Competent: A Challenge for the Lay Church* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1987), 37-38. William Droel works for the Archdiocese of Chicago's campus ministry and for RENEW. Gregory Pierce writes for ACTA Publications.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>416</sup> Foley, 147.

<sup>417</sup> Murnion, 28.

### Catholic Action, the Lay Apostolate, and the Autonomy of Lay Initiative

Although Catholic Action was defined as the laity's participation in the apostolate of the hierarchy, the broader understanding of the 'lay apostolate' has developed from Vatican II to include autonomous lay apostolic activity, specifically as the laity's catechetical formation turns increasingly outward towards a missionary focus in one's everyday secular life of family, work, and community life.<sup>418</sup> Yves Congar specifically rejected the notion that Catholic Action constitutes the "apostolic function of the laity," claiming the lay apostolate is "anterior to Catholic Action."<sup>419</sup> Canons 215 and 216 (of the 1983 CIC) reveals that 'free association' is inherent to the Church's mission, although with the qualification that proper clerical authority must be respected.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (On the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate, Encyclical Letter (Vatican City: 1990). #11, 57. Hereafter abbreviated "RM." RM orients the idea of integration in the context of why a missionary perspective is so important to the Church today. Paragraph #11 states, "a 'gradual secularization of salvation' has taken place, so that people strive for the good of man, but man who is truncated, reduced to his merely horizontal dimension. We know, however, that Jesus came to bring integral salvation, one which embraces the whole person and all mankind, and opens up the wondrous prospect of divine filiation." Quoting CL #35, RM # 57 states, "The contribution of the laity is indispensable in [the area of inter-religious dialogue], for they 'can favor the relations which ought to be established with the followers of various religions through their example in the situations in which they live and in their activities.'" In other words, authentic dialogue between lay Christians and those who profess other religions happens through the culture in which Christians live. If they are to witness the gospel in the world, then their culture, the 'situations in which they live and ... their activities,' must reflect and be shaped by their faith.

<sup>419</sup> Hagstrom, 25-26.

<sup>420</sup> CIC 215 – 216. Canons 215 reads as follows, "The Christian faithful are at liberty freely to found and direct associations for purposes of charity or piety or for the promotion of the Christian vocation in the world and to hold meetings for the common pursuit of these purposes." Canon 216 states, "Since they participate in the mission of the Church, all the Christian faithful have the right to promote or sustain apostolic action even by their own undertakings, according to their own state and condition. Nevertheless, no undertaking is to claim the name Catholic without

Catholic Action had been traditionally defined as the laity's delegated participation in the apostolate of the hierarchy,<sup>421</sup> but the lay apostolate, including some movements specifically self-defined as "Catholic Action," took on their own practical autonomy, often with contentious relationships to the hierarchy.<sup>422</sup> Catholic Action marked a revolutionary breakthrough in lay ecclesial activity, since even the Church's social ministry had been largely limited to clerics and religious. Nevertheless, Dorothy Day confesses, "the forefront of the struggle for a better social order" belonged to the Communists and other radicals at the time Pius XI established Catholic Action.<sup>423</sup> Pius XI said in 1931, "the workers of the world are lost to the Church."<sup>424</sup> Dorothy Day, as a recent convert to Catholicism, shared this sentiment and aimed to change that situation by fighting fire with fire. That competition, for lack of a better term, clearly had a bearing on both Catholic

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the consent of competent ecclesiastical authority."

<sup>421</sup> Pius XI, *On the Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ (Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio)*, #58, "Tell your faithful children of the laity that when, united with their pastors and their bishops, they participate in the works of the apostolate, both individual and social, the end purpose of which is to make Jesus Christ better known and better loved, then they are more than ever 'a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people.'"

<sup>422</sup> Alden V. Brown, *The Grail Movement in American Catholicism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), xi, 4. Brown considers "Lay Apostolate" and "Catholic Action" terms applicable to the past, in part because the principles by which they were defined were not universally implemented. Various movements, including the Grail, exemplified a plurality of models, which are not easily categorized within these terms. However, the terms do effectively describe the general wave of lay movements, which emerged in the Catholic Church after World War I. The position is taken in this thesis that "lay apostolate" is the appropriate term to describe more autonomous lay apostolic initiative in temporal affairs, a successor to Catholic Action.

<sup>423</sup> Day, *Selected Writings*, 271.

<sup>424</sup> Forest, 53, quoting Pius XI.

Action's and the Catholic Worker's inception in the 1920s-1930s.<sup>425</sup> While still operating under the rubric of Integrism, where the Church continued to seek an active and integral role in temporal affairs, the argument can still be made, outside of that particular ideology, that the hierarchy's intervention against communism was still appropriate in order to protect the faith and the freedom of believers to profess it publicly. Still, the distinction of roles between the hierarchy and the laity was in a process of evolution.

Congar, in *Lay People in the Church*, defined Catholic Action as "the point where the competence of the Church and the autonomy of the temporal articulate one another."<sup>426</sup> His view was consistent with Teilard de Chardin, who appealed to history and experience in recognizing that the "temporal realm ... [possesses] a degree of spiritual value."<sup>427</sup> Emmanuel Mounier, founder of the personalist movement and the journal *Esprit*, however, called for a more complete recognition of "integral engagement," ascribing less delineation between the

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<sup>425</sup> Pius XI, *On the Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ (Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio)* #59, "Social changes, which have created and increased the need of cooperation between the clergy and laity to which We have just referred, have themselves brought along in their wake new and most serious problems and dangers. As an after-effect of the upheaval caused by the Great War and of its political and social consequences, false ideas and unhealthy sentiments have, like a contagious disease, so taken possession of the popular mind that We have grave fears that even some among the best of our laity and of the clergy, seduced by the false appearance of truth which some of these doctrines possess, have not been altogether immune from error."

<sup>426</sup> Andrew Dawson, *The Birth and Impact of Base Ecclesial Community and Liberative Theological Discourse in Brazil*, International Scholars Publications (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1999), 35, 78-79, quoting Congar, *Lay People in the Church* (1953).

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

sacred and temporal, without digressing to pantheism.<sup>428</sup> The driving force behind specialized Catholic Action was Cardinal Cardijn's methodology of "see-judge-act," which essentially tried to implement the kind of theologically understood social action that Congar, Teilard de Chardin and Mounier sought.<sup>429</sup> Based on Galatians 6:4, "All must test their own work," Catholic Action brought faith formation into the realm of civic life, bridging the temporal and sacred, while still recognizing that the laity have a particular and unique sphere of activity in secular affairs.<sup>430</sup>

D'Antonio, et. al. give a helpful review of American Catholics' participation in "voluntary associations," and how that has contributed to shaping attitudes toward authority and leadership in the American Catholic Church. The authors claim that American Catholics essentially followed American Protestants in viewing the formation of these associations in the nineteenth century as a form of democratic self-help and freedom of association, accountable to no specific state or ecclesial authority.<sup>431</sup> However, the Vatican's perspective on voluntary associations at that time countered that "basic values about freedom and autonomy ... were a central evil of the modern society," which led to the tension

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<sup>428</sup> Ibid.

<sup>429</sup> Cuplinskas, "Guns and rosaries." "This new method led these young workers to analyze their milieu in very concrete terms with the aim of changing it in the light of Christian teaching."

<sup>430</sup> Wolfteich, 155, 166-168.

<sup>431</sup> D'Antonio, et. al., 6, 8.

between autonomy and authority in American Catholicism.<sup>432</sup> As examples of early American Catholic voluntary associations, D'Antonio, et. al., specifically name the Catholic Worker and the journal *Commonweal*, as well as the Knights of Columbus, though the latter, they claim, became "ultimately submissive" to ecclesiastical authority.<sup>433</sup> In this regard, then, American lay movements of this more autonomous type find their lineage in the dominant ideological climate of the U.S. in the twentieth century, not ecclesiastical auspices, like Catholic Action, as was the case with Focolare.<sup>434</sup>

The autonomy among the laity that emerged in practice through Catholic Action led scholars to pursue questions related to the nature of the laity's sacramental character, the nature of charisms and discernment, and the activity of the Holy Spirit, both within the Church's structures, communally among the gathered assembly and within each baptized disciple. According to Kleissler, Catholic Action did much to promote the ongoing development of lay leadership in the Church, particularly with the goal of lay Catholics taking the religious-based principles learned into the affairs and institutions of the secular world.<sup>435</sup> Through the "lay apostolate," which Eugene McCarraher distinguishes from Catholic Action, pre-World War II American Catholics, amidst a tidal wave of pressures to

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>435</sup> Kleissler, et. al., 9.

assimilate to a "nascent culture of corporate professionalism," received a "substantial experience of lay power."<sup>436</sup> McCarraher specifically notes Dorothy Day, Catherine de Hueck Doherty (Friendship House and Madonna House), and the Grail Movement as embodiments of this more autonomous apostolate, as opposed to the delegation inherent to Catholic Action.<sup>437</sup>

Beyond the American context, Focolare could easily be counted in that number as well, though it stayed closer to the bosom of the hierarchy than American movements, like the Catholic Worker. Lubich explicitly "attributes the growth and spread of Focolare to their obedience to the Bishops."<sup>438</sup> During the 1950s in which the Holy Office was investigating Focolare, Lubich says, "you don't criticize your mother [referring to ecclesiastical authorities ... even though the child may not understand the reasons for such a course of action]."<sup>439</sup> Lubich continued by declaring the movement's undying yet unique brand of unity with 'Holy Mother Church.'<sup>440</sup> Gallagher states that Lubich views the "Pontifical Council for the Laity and the Pope" as those to whom she owes her obedience

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<sup>436</sup> Eugene McCarraher, "Smile, When You Say 'Laity'," *Commonweal* 124, no. 15 (September 12, 1997), 21-23. Eugene McCarraher teaches at the University of Delaware.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid., 21-23.

<sup>438</sup> Gallagher, 208.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>440</sup> Lubich, "For a Philosophy that Stems from Christ," 749.

and fidelity.<sup>441</sup> Of her "unfailing loyalty to the Pope," Lubich is quoted as having said, "It may not be fashionable ... but it is the truth."<sup>442</sup>

The American experience of the lay apostolate was not immune to the push toward "liberty and intelligence," as its rise signaled an observable challenge to the clergy by "lay Catholic intellectuals," whether they were writing for *Commonweal* or for the *Catholic Worker*. Also, the "resurgence" of Catholic literature in the early twentieth century raised questions about the 'relevance' and "inadequacy" of "clerical structures," because they were no longer perceived by many to speak to the modern human condition of "day-to-day meaning with God."<sup>443</sup> Nevertheless, the laity lacked "cultural capital," as the lay apostolate was still largely defined in terms of Catholic Action. However, the emergence of the military-industrial complex that followed World War II, and later Vatican II, both confirmed that the laity was coming into its own, economically, politically, and even religiously, spurred on by what McCarraher calls a "vision of abundance."<sup>444</sup> Gary Wills says of liberal social ethicist John Courtney Murray that

his whole point had been to locate the secular order as something separate, having its own expertise and proper autonomy; but the actual

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<sup>441</sup> Gallagher, 166.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid., 208, quoting Lubich.

<sup>443</sup> Osbourne, 523-524. Among 'Catholic writers,' Osbourne lists Bernanos, Bloy, Mauriac, Peguy, Graham Greene, and Flannery O'Connor.

<sup>444</sup> McCarraher, "Smile, When You Say 'Laity,'" 21-23.

effect of his work was to make the secular respectable even for Churchly people.<sup>445</sup>

Indeed, the desires for either separation or integration go both ways. Ed Marciniak, in *Tomorrow's Christian* (1969) opposed "clerical activism," especially regarding Civil Rights, "as an encroachment on the role of the layman [sic], who is the secular 'insider.'"<sup>446</sup> More recently, Chicago's archbishop, Francis Cardinal George, notes that lay-clerical "distinctions ... safeguard lay initiative," in addition to protecting the "essential difference" between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood.<sup>447</sup>

Around the time of Vatican II, a trend emerged where large numbers of clergy and vowed religious frequently engaged in community activism "in the name of social justice," while simultaneously recruiting laypersons to take on the responsibilities of many internal ecclesial ministries.<sup>448</sup> Concerns over this reversal of roles led to the "Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern" in 1977-78.<sup>449</sup> The Chicago Declaration itself accused priest-activists of 'bypassing' the laity, whom they should have been empowering to take responsibility for the mission to build the Kingdom in the realm of the everyday working world. The

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<sup>445</sup> Gary Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy and Radical Religion* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1971), 144.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>447</sup> Francis Cardinal George, OMI, "Magisterial Teaching," in *Together in God's Service: Toward a Theology of Ecclesial Lay Ministry. Papers from a Colloquium*. (Washington, DC: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Subcommittee on Lay Ministry, Committee on the Laity, 1998), 135. George is the cardinal-archbishop of Chicago.

<sup>448</sup> Murnion, 23.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*; the Declaration was signed in 1977 but published by *Commonweal* in 1978.

Declaration's concern that clerical activism had usurped Vatican II's call to the laity and threatened a kind of "revived clericalism."<sup>450</sup> However, instead of coming from the more traditional 'right,' the Declaration warns against "clericalism ... on the left."<sup>451</sup> This threat of clerically dictated secular agendas gave rise to what the Declaration called a "preoccupation with the role of the 'outsider'" in social activism, who is portrayed as the priest-reformer, rather than promoting the "apostolic potential" of the laity in the "professional and occupational" setting.<sup>452</sup>

Against the Declaration's criticism that Catholic social witness had placed the Church 'outside' the work-a-day context of the laity, John Garvey points to figures, like Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton's protégé and former *Catholic Worker* editor, Jim Forest, as the appropriate laypersons, who justify the "outsider's role."<sup>453</sup> Garvey also disagrees that the clergy had been "imposing agendas" of social reform on the laity, citing his own anecdotal experience of the many instances of clergy and religious collaborating on an equal footing with laypersons, particularly during the period of anti-Vietnam War protests.<sup>454</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether also criticizes the Chicago Declaration's polemic

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<sup>450</sup> "A Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern," 109.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

<sup>453</sup> John Garvey, "An Ironic Problem," *Commonweal* 105, no. 4 (February 17, 1978), 114. John Garvey is an editor at Templegate Publications, an Orthodox priest and columnist for *Commonweal*.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid., 114.

against the witness of the 'outsider' by arguing that the outsider status is the right position to be in against what she perceives as the oppression of the institutional church, the state, and the industrial-corporate complex.<sup>455</sup> John Coleman nuances his support of this 'outsider' witness by arguing that it is these very outsiders, namely "the poor, the marginal non-participants, the developing nations," et cetera, who become "carriers of a new social ethic ... to judge the justice of any social order."<sup>456</sup> Without these 'outsiders,' Coleman continues, "the worldly calling [of the laity] might be a surrender to purely secular trends."<sup>457</sup> At the same time, Coleman agrees with the Declaration that these 'outsiders' are not "the principal actors in changing the social order," suggesting that this only strengthens the argument for a prophetic witness that instigates an active mission of solidarity to change an oppressive status quo.<sup>458</sup> In agreement with Coleman, advocacy of the 'outsider' is understood here as prophetic witness, which is necessary for the integration of both the personal and communitarian and for the integration of faith and culture. In order to accomplish this witness, rightly and virtuously ordered relationships must be sought, despite all of their

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<sup>455</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Matters Left Unsaid," *Commonweal* 105, no. 4 (February 17, 1978), 113. Radford Ruether is a Catholic feminist theologian teaching at Garrett Theological Seminary and is a member of the Graduate Faculty of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

<sup>456</sup> John A. Coleman, "The Worldly Calling," *Ibid.*, 116. Fr. John Coleman, SJ, teaches theology at Loyola Marymount in Los Angeles, CA and formerly at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, California, and the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*

complexity, like God to person, person to person, person to Church/community, community to community, and so on. The model offered by the Church for appropriately integrated relationships is ecclesial communion.

John Paul II, after the 1987 Synod on the Laity, affirmed the theological context in which secularity should be understood and how the concept is rooted in the Incarnation and humanity's share in creation, which the laity carry on through their work and families.<sup>459</sup> In other words, all people share a "common dignity," but one that is distinct from "ministerial priesthood ... without, however, bringing about a separation."<sup>460</sup> In Paragraph #31 of *Christifideles Laici*, the Pope addresses "pastors in service to communion" by acknowledging the difficulties for the clergy to be guiding lay associations, but he affirms the pastors' "service provided by their authority," stating that the guidance of pastors is helpful, if not necessary, "so that lay associations might grow in Church communion and mission."<sup>461</sup> Sicari refers to integration, as opposed to "strict separation" of states of life, as "the maturation of the Church's consciousness of Vatican II."<sup>462</sup> Yet, Sicari also defends secularity as a necessary locus of the laity, whose primary and most immediate mission is to "their family and their work."<sup>463</sup> The end result of balancing all of these ecclesial roles entails a creative tension, a give-and-

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<sup>459</sup> CL #43, citing GS #67.

<sup>460</sup> CL # 15.

<sup>461</sup> CL #31.

<sup>462</sup> Sicari, 306.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid.

take, like any relationship among members of the same family, which demands mutual respect, love, and obedience.

The issue of varying cultural responses or relationships to the Church between American Catholics and Catholics from the rest of the world, particularly Europe and Latin America, has a tremendous bearing on why this thesis is specifically pursuing the diverse examples of Focolare and the Catholic Worker. According to Roger Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles, "the formation of new movements" (he gives Communion and Liberation and Opus Dei as two examples) was a response to the renewal of the lay apostolate, reflecting what he calls the laity's "share in the mission of Christ in and through the use of their talents and opportunities in the world of human affairs," in the period leading up to and after the Second Vatican Council.<sup>464</sup> Further, Mahony explains that the lack of response in numbers to the movements among American Catholics (compared to European Catholics) reflects "more pragmatic and less movement-oriented" tendencies in religious practice and the "pluralistic context of normal pastoral structures in the U.S."<sup>465</sup> Europeans, according to Mahony, and one might add Latin American Catholics as well, have shown a more "single-minded

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<sup>464</sup> Roger M. Mahony, "Priests and Laity: Mutual Empowerment," in *That They Might Live: Power, Empowerment and Leadership in the Church*, ed. Michael Downey (New York City: Crossroad, 1991), 104-105. Mahoney is the cardinal-archbishop of Los Angeles.

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

commitment [to] the movements."<sup>466</sup> Others have noticed this cultural difference as well.

John Coleman notes that Catholic Action never really suited the American Church on the basis of the uncertain nature of authority given to the laity, or as Coleman asks, "Who had the mandate?"<sup>467</sup> William D'Antonio and his colleagues further point out that there has developed "increased tension" in the post-Vatican II Church over pluralism, especially for those who seek to uphold and even strengthen the 'authoritarianism' of the hierarchy, essentially exasperating any tension that already existed between the notions of autonomy and obedience among the laity.<sup>468</sup> Another consideration, according to Coleman, includes the American Catholic Action groups' historical tendency to adopt and appropriate peculiarly American and "secular liberal" socio-economic policies, like the "New Deal,"<sup>469</sup> which also seems to resonate, at least in part, with Mahony's observation of pragmatism.

The evolving views of leading theologians, philosophers, and Church leaders through multiple generations have both opened the doors both to more autonomous distinction but also to a certain level of overlap, which has inevitably led both to role reversals and to positive collaboration. The history of this

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<sup>466</sup> Ibid.

<sup>467</sup> Coleman, 115.

<sup>468</sup> D'Antonio, et. al., 14.

<sup>469</sup> Coleman, 115.

conceptual development displays all of these intersecting and divergent paths, which has fueled so much ongoing debate. By understanding the value of integration, especially in the context of ecclesial communion, one's ability to embrace the give and take, or *dialogue*, of authority and autonomy, unity and distinction, secular and sacred, personalist and communitarian, becomes more comfortable, even as the relevance and priority of these forces undulate through time in the life of the Church. Such flexibility only confirms the universality and timelessness of the Church, even as this mystery is deeply rooted in – or integrated with – the particulars of diverse cultures and in ever-changing historical circumstances. The Church's divine transcendence allows it to withstand the bending of innovation and controversy without ever really breaking under the strain or veering completely outside of God's relationship and presence amidst humanity. As has already become apparent in this conceptual overview, both Focolare and the Catholic Worker have actively participated in the process of responding to and even shaping the changing understandings of the lay apostolate in their particular cultures and in the Church universal.

Chiara Lubich promotes the notion that seeking "eschatological fulfillment" through the "Word incarnate and risen" constitutes the "groaning of creation" (Romans 8:22), which seems to have fallen on deaf ears through the

secularization of cultures.<sup>470</sup> This concept of seeking the eschatological in the world here-and-now expresses Lubich's world-embracing and subjective sense of participation in the divine act of creation. Through this personal and lifelong relationship with God, Lubich argues, spiritual value can be discovered in the mundane things of life, which comes to fruition through the unique life-story of each person.<sup>471</sup> From Lubich's positive view of the temporal world, she integrates rather than divides the sacred and the secular, acknowledging the missionary significance of the lay vocation to secularity.

Sounding like a *focolarina*, Day recollects in *The Long Loneliness* about her retreat director, Fr. John Hugo, through whom she learned that "we have been raised above ourselves by baptism, and the law of the supernatural life is love, a love which demands renunciation."<sup>472</sup> In this sense, the two foundresses share a profound sense of lay ecclesial identity, reflecting what Paul Hanley Furfey called a "theological ... social theory," which, according to Michael Baxter, is a prophetic, even "heroic," vocation, like that of "Christ and the saints."<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Lubich, "For a Philosophy that Stems from Christ," 754-755.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid.

<sup>472</sup> Baxter, "Notes on Catholic Americanism and Catholic Radicalism," 63, quoting Day, *The Long Loneliness*.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid., 62, citing Furfey.

### Focolare and the Integration of Faith and Culture

Chiara Lubich has assessed the cultural situation in the world as dire enough to claim that in "today's de-Christianized and materialistic society, Christians ... must build ... a spiritual cloister."<sup>474</sup> On its own, this statement might seem to suggest that Lubich would favor a retreat or renunciation from the secular world, rather than an engagement with it. However, in 1971, she stated emphatically, "the world needs to be enlightened, healed and cleansed by a solid block of Christians among whom lives Christ."<sup>475</sup> Further, Mitchell reflects the clear communitarian emphasis of Focolare spirituality by emphatically stating that "solitude" and "avoidance" is not the "way to God," but "graced unity among persons" is the path to sanctity.<sup>476</sup> Therefore, no matter how contemplative her spirituality may be, Lubich does not shy away from social engagement.

Lubich teaches that the sacramental presence of 'Jesus in the midst' guides disciples to a "clarification of all human realities," including the human experience of work and family life.<sup>477</sup> The main guiding principle for Jesus in the

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<sup>474</sup> Povilus, 99, quoting Lubich, *Spiritual Writings* 11.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid., 97, quoting Lubich in a letter dated March 6, 1971.

<sup>476</sup> Mitchell, 173.

<sup>477</sup> Povilus, 100. (quoting Lubich in a recording from July 7, 1969), 115-116 (quoting Lubich, "*Dialogo aperto*." *Città Nuova* 21, no. 1, 1977). Povilus states, "families that have Jesus in their midst can in a certain sense, be called Focolare centers. Further, Povilus writes, the spirit of 'Jesus in the midst' "can be detected in the homes, the workplaces, the schools, and in the interpersonal relationships that makes Loppiano [Focolare's permanent Mariapolis] ... a city on the mountain top which all can see."

midst 'taking root,' however, is abandonment of self to grace and allowing Christ to live within the heart of each person.<sup>478</sup> Lubich relates this 'rooting' process to the Catholic Action methodology of "see-judge-act," writing, "If [unity] occurs, it would no longer be [people] who act, pray, and celebrate ... but Jesus in them!"<sup>479</sup> This abandonment, following the example and teaching of Christ, demands self-giving love to others. Lubich's primary model of Christian community is the Holy Family of Nazareth, which she describes as "a home which houses members of the mystical body ... united in charity, [and] have Jesus mystically present in their midst."<sup>480</sup> This is consistent with the idea of the communitarian dimension of the lay apostolate, as defined in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, which cites Matthew 18:20 ('Jesus in the midst of those gathered in his name') in demanding that a "spirit of concord" reign throughout the "principal fields of lay apostolic activity," which includes parish and family life.<sup>481</sup>

As the charismatic leader of a "lay movement," Lubich has communicated that "Mary is a model for all lay people in the Church," and the key to following Mary is allowing oneself to be "docile" to the will of God.<sup>482</sup> This model for lay sanctity not only reflects the incarnational reality that Lubich claims for Focolare as the very embodiment of Mary, but Donald Mitchell relates 'doing God's will' to

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<sup>478</sup> Ibid., 17, quoting Lubich in a letter dated February 27, 1948.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>481</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 79, quoting AA #9-11, 18.

<sup>482</sup> Gallagher, 211.

participating in the divine life itself.<sup>483</sup> Enzo Fondi relates the "ecclesial nature" of Mary, as the mother of all vocations in the Church, as well as the Blessed Virgin's secularity and "her universality" to a 'way of sanctity' for all to follow, inviting the participation of humanity into God's redemptive mission.<sup>484</sup> It is this 'Marian profile,' according to Piero Coda, which lies at the heart of the Church's renewal of the laity's ministerial role in the Church's contemporary "apostolic agenda."<sup>485</sup>

The notion of surrendering obediently to God's grace and will, as well as finding the sacred in the everyday circumstances of life, exemplifies the Marian profile of the Church, which is the primary model for the laity in mission.<sup>486</sup> Also, the ecclesial dimensions of love and surrender (the Johannine dimension), of apostolicity and of evangelization (the Pauline dimension) are also vital to understanding the laity's place and role in the Church. Mitchell extends the 'profile' of Focolare as also exemplifying this Pauline model, which calls disciples to participate in Christ's redemptive mission, bringing "the spiritual life" together

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<sup>483</sup> Mitchell, 180. Mitchell cites St. Francis de Sale, who described doing the will of God as personifying the very concept itself, as in 'being one' with God's "design." Further, Mitchell quotes Lubich, who states, "God and his will are one and the same."

<sup>484</sup> Fondi, 54-55.

<sup>485</sup> Piero Coda, "A Spirituality for Today: An Inquiry into a New Way of Being Human and Priest," in *Priests of the Future: Formation and Communion*, ed. Michael Mulvey (New York City: New City Press, 1991), 25.

<sup>486</sup> AA #4 reads, "The perfect example of this type of spiritual and apostolic life is the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles, who while leading the life common to all here on earth, one filled with family concerns and labors, was always intimately united with her Son and in an entirely unique way cooperated in the work of the Savior."

"at the same level" with "work and family."<sup>487</sup> This integrated sense of spiritual discernment, together with everyday life, reveals what Mitchell calls the "sanctity of work," referring to the holiness that can be discovered in that which is mundane.<sup>488</sup>

In the context of explaining how "mutual love" leads to voluntary rather than "obligatory" sharing with those in need, Lubich defines Focolare's ethic of social service.<sup>489</sup> Referring to Focolare "Volunteers" as the "early Christians of the twentieth century," Lubich lists the following as ways in which the movement's members live charitably: 1) by sharing their leftover funds as their conscience dictates; 2) by making sure to care for dependents who are not in the movement; 3) by taking stock of what they own and making them available to the needy; and finally, 4) through international relief to developing countries.<sup>490</sup> Like Day, who makes a sharp distinction between voluntary poverty for the sake of the kingdom and involuntary and dehumanizing destitution, Lubich views voluntary poverty as a means of living for other people, a self-emptying love imitative of Christ on the cross, or "Jesus Forsaken."<sup>491</sup> Lubich cites the first Christian community of Acts as a model of voluntary poverty, and she emphasizes the communal dimension over that of individual discipleship and individual

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<sup>487</sup> Mitchell, 187.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 24.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

holiness.<sup>492</sup> The difference, according to Lubich, is the just distribution of goods, based on the needs of all.<sup>493</sup> Povilus relates that the social witness of Focolare bears a particular emphasis for "those who are deprived – who lack a sense of dignity, physical goods, love and forgiveness."<sup>494</sup> In other words, they seek primarily to lift up the human person in the spiritual sense, though they do not neglect basic physical needs, as will be shown in their extensive and actively beneficial economic project called the Economy of Communion.

On a visit to Brazil in the early 1990s, Lubich witnessed and was shocked at the unspeakable poverty and the disparate economic conditions among focolarini. She described the "shanty towns in a circle surrounding the city" as a "crown of thorns."<sup>495</sup> Seeking to respond to the principles of John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus* (1991), Lubich founded the project, "Economy of Communion." Luigino Bruni describes the Economy of Communion (EoC) as an application of "communion" as mutual and gratuitous giving translated into real economics.<sup>496</sup> He makes it clear that the context for this project is "civil society,"

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<sup>492</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

<sup>494</sup> Povilus, 8.

<sup>495</sup> Mark Zwick and Louise Zwick, "The Catholic Worker, Model for Church and World for the Civilization of Love," *The Houston Catholic Worker* XXIII, no. 6 (November - December 2003), Casa Juan Diego (Houston Catholic Worker) [website]; available from [www.cjd.org/paper/model~](http://www.cjd.org/paper/model~). Lorna Gold, "Case Study: The Focolare Movement - Evangelization and Contemporary Culture," *International Review of Mission* (Jan. 1, 2003), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library~](http://www.highbeam.com/library~).

<sup>496</sup> Luigino Bruni, "The Experience of the 'Economy of Communion' and Its Relation to the 'Civil Economy'," *Communio* 27 (Summer 2002), 464-465.

not the "market" or "state."<sup>497</sup> Civil society is more like a "non-profit sector," but EoC is "for-profit ... inspired by ... charity, and care for those in need."<sup>498</sup> The Economy of Communion offers, according to Trocaire's Dr. Lorna Gold, a real "alternative" to consumerism and globalization, if only "self-interest and economic efficiency" can be acknowledged as inadequate motivations for work and trade and a "culture of giving" can prevail.<sup>499</sup> EoC consists of businesses that address the pressing needs of poverty, like social services, health and child care, as well as manufacturing and trade, all on a local scale.<sup>500</sup> The specific products and services covered by these categories are as diverse as the local communities who own them, from Italy and Western Europe, to Latin America. In 2003, there were 778 EoC businesses (see note), mostly in the areas just mentioned.<sup>501</sup> Beyond mere charity, those who benefit most, the recipients of the assistance, participate fully in the economic development process, mutually enriching everyone involved.<sup>502</sup> EoC profits are divided among the needy for further investment in development in impoverished areas and for the maintenance and growth of the business itself.<sup>503</sup> Consistent with Focolare's spirituality, the focus

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<sup>497</sup> Ibid., 467.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid.

<sup>499</sup> Gold, "Case Study: The Focolare Movement."

<sup>500</sup> Bruni, 469-470.

<sup>501</sup> Zwick and Zwick, "The Catholic Worker, Model for Church and World"; Bruni, 466.

The Zwicks report from 2003 reflects some modest progress of the EoC project, which according to Bruni had 771 businesses in 1999.

<sup>502</sup> Bruni, 470.

<sup>503</sup> Gold, "Case Study: The Focolare Movement."

of EoC is on "self-giving and social capital – trust, cooperation, [and] non-instrumental relationships."<sup>504</sup> It is especially notable that the only published treatment found that specifically addresses the similarities between the Catholic Worker and Focolare focuses on how Focolare's Economy of Communion reflects the spirit of Day and Maurin. Mark and Louise Zwick, in an article for the website of their Casa Juan Diego in Houston, Texas, write,

Like the Catholic Worker, the Focolare movement emphasizes Matthew 25. Chiara said, "The brothers and sisters who are in need are often the ones who help others in one way or another. They are a special kind of Jesus who deserves our love and who one day will say to us: 'I was hungry, I was naked, I was homeless, or in a house in need of repair ... and you ...' We know what he will say to us."<sup>505</sup>

#### The Catholic Worker and the Integration of Faith and Culture

In the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, Day felt the need in 1940 to spell out, or to "reiterate" the movement's "aims and purposes ... for the sake of new readers."<sup>506</sup> Among these 'aims and purposes,' she lists, "works of mercy, feeding, clothing, and sheltering our brothers."<sup>507</sup> The fulfillment being sought through action is "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."<sup>508</sup> For Day, the Catholic Worker aimed toward the realization of a society, which truly integrates Christian faith with just social structures, which emphasizes the "primacy of the

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<sup>504</sup> Bruni, 470.

<sup>505</sup> Zwick and Zwick, "The Catholic Worker, Model for Church and World."

<sup>506</sup> Day, *Selected Writings*, 91-92.

<sup>507</sup> Ibid.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

spiritual," a basic tenet of personalism, despite the imperfections of humanity, whose efforts are always inadequate.<sup>509</sup> Jim Forest recalls the intensity of Day's own prayer life and religious practice, which included daily Mass, weekly confession, and regular devotions, including recitation of the Rosary and of the "Jesus Prayer."<sup>510</sup> Recognizing that the Catholic Worker only made sense in the context of prayer, Forest further recollects seeing Day "first of all on her knees ... She prayed as if lives depended on it."<sup>511</sup>

From this brief summary of Day's spiritual practice, along with the 'aims and purposes' she defined above, it is important to acknowledge that integrating faith and the ordinary situations in the daily life of the laity, spoken of broadly here as "culture," does not necessarily mean secularizing the faith. Consistent with the personalist principle of spiritual primacy, Day and Lubich's examples are more about sanctifying the ordinary, not secularizing the sacred. Still, balance (or moderation) helps to keep the scales even and allows rightly ordered and dialogic relationships to remain reciprocal, rooted in self-giving love, rather than mere utility. The key watchwords that Lubich uses to express her notions of seeking interconnected and right relationships between humanity and God and between each person to another include brotherhood, unity, 'love for neighbor' and charity. Lubich describes 'unity' as a "prophetic, eschatological vision of the

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<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>510</sup> Forest, 154.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

kingdom that already begins here-and-now in order to be completed in heaven."<sup>512</sup> These could be the words of either foundress.

Raising the level of public consciousness on social justice issues can motivate collective action, but it requires the kind of face-to-face dialogue and debate among people themselves that the Catholic Worker and Focolare have shown. Enzo Fondi says that work informed by faith imitates the life of the Holy Family, which is characterized by competent tradecraft, but it also adapts to the needs of the community, sacrificing one's own progress for others.<sup>513</sup> Citing Ephesians 4:28, Lubich answers the question 'why work?' by suggesting that the reason or object of human labor is to share with those in need.<sup>514</sup> Striking a very similar chord, Dorothy Day quotes Peter Maurin who said that there is "plenty of work ... but no wages ... people do not need to work for wages. They can offer their services as a gift."<sup>515</sup> The notion of viewing everything as a "gift" anticipates what is today referred to as the 'spirituality of stewardship.'<sup>516</sup> Though she may

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<sup>512</sup> Povilus, 17.

<sup>513</sup> Fondi, 53.

<sup>514</sup> Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity*, 30. Ephesians 4:28 reads, "The thief must no longer steal, but rather labor, doing honest work with his [own] hands, so that he may have something to share with one in need."

<sup>515</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 28, quoting Maurin.

<sup>516</sup> C. Justin Clements, *The Steward's Way: A Spirituality of Stewardship*, Pastoral Ministry Series (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1997), 24, 78. C. Justin Clements serves as the stewardship and development director for the Diocese of Evansville. He writes, stewardship ... is the primary measure of our vocation to discipleship ... [It] obligates us, in gratitude for God's gifts, to return a portion of these gifts to build up God's kingdom on earth ... from our human need to give and share. (24) Among the principles of 'good stewardship,' Clements lists two, which read, You might be a good steward if ... you believe that everything you have and everything ...

not articulate Lubich's Mariology, Dorothy Day does echo the sentiment in Lubich's notions of docility to grace and in her self-sacrificing acceptance, her fiat, to bear Jesus. Day writes,

Christ is with us today, not only in the Blessed Sacrament, and where two or three are gathered together in His Name, but also in the poor ... It is too easy to forget that all we give is given to us to give. Nothing is ours.<sup>517</sup>

Mary's gift to God and to humanity was her "yes," making Christ humanly present to the world, continued in the Eucharist, all of which is God's gift for humanity to give back to the world. Additionally, the concept that one's labor can be viewed in more selfless terms runs against the grain of capitalist economics, which values individual achievement and accumulation of wealth. However, if and when "solidarity" becomes a specific and explicit strategy for social organization, including economic policy, Kleissler and colleagues argue that then such a "countercultural," gospel-based witness might emerge and spark real interior conversion among people, transforming what Kleissler calls a "frustrated, rootless, homeless, lonely, lost in anonymity, and alienated" culture.<sup>518</sup>

Linking their views on poverty and labor, Day cites Maurin's distinction between 'making a living' and 'work.' Recalling the pro-agrarian, "physiocrat" economist, Victor de Riqueti, the Marquis de Mirabeau, Maurin argued that "there

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around you is not yours but is 'on loan' from God ...[and] you understand that stewardship is not an option but an obligation for you as a disciple of Jesus. (78)

<sup>517</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 177.

<sup>518</sup> Kleissler, et. al., 10, 12, 23.

were three ways to make a living – begging, stealing and working,” and “stealing [is] against the law of God and the law of man,” while “begging is against the law of man, but not against the law of God.”<sup>519</sup> Further, Maurin says, “work ... is against neither the law of God nor the law of man.”<sup>520</sup> Maurin seems to be making the point that work produces mutual benefits, when it is grounded in a morally-informed faith and based on selfless service, as opposed to accumulating individual wealth to the detriment of the poor, which can be equated to stealing.<sup>521</sup> Interestingly, Chiara Lubich drew the same analogy of ‘stealing from the poor,’ by quoting Aquinas, who said, “When the rich, for their personal ends, consume the surplus necessary for the sustenance of the poor, they are stealing from them.”<sup>522</sup>

Early *Catholic Worker* labor reporting dealt with a plethora of issues, like “wage reductions, strikes, evictions, racial incidents ... food relief for displaced sharecroppers; poor mothers in need of childcare ... [and] the conditions of life

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<sup>519</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 28.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

<sup>521</sup> Day, *Selected Writings*, 293-294. In her letter to the Treasurer of New York City in which she returns the \$3579.39 paid to the Catholic Worker for the eminent domain sale of the house on Chrystie Street, Day writes, “We do not believe in the profit system, and so we cannot take profit or interest on our money. People who take a materialistic view of human service wish to make a profit but we are trying to do our duty by our service without wages to our brothers as Jesus commanded in the Gospel (Matthew 25).” Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 86. Citing the editor of *The Social Justice Review*, Kenkel, Dorothy Day argues that economic determinism, or the “love of money,” exploits the poor, especially in the under-developed world. Further, she offers a solution to such exploitation, the boycotting of the “war economy,” which includes working in industry and paying taxes, by means of voluntary poverty.

Zwick and Zwick, “The Catholic Worker, Model for Church and World.”

for slum children."<sup>523</sup> The Catholic Worker's contacts with the labor movement ran so deep, reports Piehl, that Day was "one of only two reporters permitted ... to enter the auto plants during the General Motors" strikes in the mid-thirties.<sup>524</sup> Among the pioneer labor organizing efforts in which the Catholic Worker participated was the plight of exploited farm workers. Nearly thirty years *before* Cesar Chavez founded the United Farm Workers Association (1962), the *Catholic Worker* advocated their cause.<sup>525</sup> The Catholic Worker advocated "cooperative ownership and management."<sup>526</sup> Piehl argues that the Catholic Worker's support for labor unions was qualified by its own radicalism that defied liberal accommodation to American capitalism.<sup>527</sup> These "perfectionist objections" America's industrialization and free-market system would distance the Catholic Worker from their early, coming-of-age followers, like John Cort and Ed Marciniak, who were increasingly joining the more mainstream Catholic labor organizing groups, like the American Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU) and the Committee for Industrial Organizations (CIO).<sup>528</sup> Day bemoaned that while unions did benefit workers, the unions were not sufficient by themselves, because wages did not keep up with the cost of living, and because the unions

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<sup>523</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 68.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>525</sup> Forest, 120.

<sup>526</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 41.

<sup>527</sup> Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 168.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, 164, 167. Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 140. John Cort participated in the Catholic Worker's efforts to support the maritime strike from 1936-1937.

gladly participated in military-based U.S. economy, later referred to as the 'military-industrial complex,' rather than standing against it.<sup>529</sup> Nevertheless, the movement's attention to the plight of workers and their unswerving witness against the dehumanizing aspects of industrialization play a large role in their example of informing their views on work by considering the moral and spiritual implications. The Catholic Worker's counter-weight to the unions accommodation to progressive reliance on industry was Peter Maurin's idealistic promotion of agrarianism.

As the Catholic Worker grew in numbers of houses of hospitality and subscriptions to the newspaper in the mid-thirties, Day felt that the time had come to pay more attention to Maurin's 'three-point program,' particularly to the concept of agrarianism and farming communes, what he called "agronomic universities."<sup>530</sup> Maurin's idea was for these farming communities to consist of a cooperatively governing family of families, but led by an "abbot-like coordinator ... [and] centered on a chapel [with] daily Mass."<sup>531</sup> The first Catholic Worker farming commune was on Staten Island, called Peter Maurin Farm, which was reportedly "so small" that Day considered it more of a "gardening commune."<sup>532</sup> Still, the produce that came from the single acre farm helped sustain both those

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<sup>529</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 87.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>531</sup> Forest, 68.

<sup>532</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 45.

who lived there as well as provided a much appreciated supply of fresh vegetables to the New York City Catholic Worker.<sup>533</sup> Along with the larger "Maryfarm" near Easton, Pennsylvania, the Staten Island farm spawned at least seven other "communitarian farms," all of which were located in the Northeast and Midwest U.S.<sup>534</sup> Dorothy Day, despite her inclination to gravitate toward urban issues and pursuits, adopted Maurin's agrarianism.<sup>535</sup> Unfortunately, however, Day recalled that the Easton farm, where Peter Maurin lived the last years of his life, became a "household of sad afflicted creatures," where squabbling and laziness reigned.<sup>536</sup> The problems that plagued these farming attempts ultimately led to the demise of many of these communities, but Forest commends these farming experiments with providing a rural refuge to city-folk, who would not have otherwise had such an experience available to them.<sup>537</sup> The farms also provided the Catholic Workers the opportunity to discuss the role of the land in their gospel-inspired social witness, and they continue to "arouse the conscience" on the dangers of industrialization and urbanization to the human spirit.<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>533</sup> Ibid.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid., 55; Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 129. Piehl reports that there were "about a dozen Catholic Worker farms."

<sup>535</sup> Forest, 68.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid.; Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 130.

<sup>537</sup> Forest, 69-70.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid., 70, quoting Day; Cf. Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 132.

At the "heart of the Catholic Worker," the principles of "love and service to the poor, personalism, voluntary poverty, pacifism and participation in manual labor" have continued to shape the ongoing mission of the movement, according to the Zwicks.<sup>539</sup> These principles are not just viewed as ethereal ideals. Vinje states, "true poverty of spirit presupposes literal material dispossession."<sup>540</sup> The identity of 'the poor' and the necessity to be poor in solidarity with one another went hand-in-hand. Maurin spoke of the liberating love of voluntary poverty, saying people should 'strip themselves' for their fellow human being.<sup>541</sup> Day wrote in *Loaves and Fishes*, "We are our brother's keeper. Whatever we have beyond our own needs belongs to the poor."<sup>542</sup> Citing St. Paul, she echoed the command, "Let your abundance supply their want."<sup>543</sup> Voluntary poverty is practiced in the Catholic Worker as a method of social transformation, and following John 12:8, the poor, they believe, are "the surest guarantee for the abiding presence of God, in the midst of the world."<sup>544</sup> This perspective on the role of the poor witnesses the radical inclusivity of the gospel, embodied in the Eucharist and the sacramental understanding of the Church as communion.

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<sup>539</sup> Zwick and Zwick, "Roots of the Catholic Worker Movement," 68.

<sup>540</sup> Vinje, 169.

<sup>541</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 86.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid., quoting 2 Cor. 8:14.

<sup>544</sup> Vinje, 169.

### Summary of Chapter Three

The lay apostolate in general and lay movements in particular serve as the Church's frontlines in witnessing against secularization and materialism and for integrating faith and culture, especially in western, industrialized societies. At the heart of this witness is an active consciousness of the sacredness of creation, the spiritual and moral value in the ordinary activities of daily life, and the self-giving nature of the divine life and love into which all Christ's faithful are baptized. This *consciousness* of the integration inherent in faith and life translates into *activity* through the lay apostolate of the Church. This apostolic mission does not call the laity away from their everyday affairs. Rather, it calls them to transform that which is purely functional into a sacred participation of God's gift of creation, particularly by witnessing to justice in society and by sharing one's gifts with those in need. Likewise, the hierarchical institutions of the Church, or the apostolate of the hierarchy, have the pastoral task of forming the laity to unified evangelical and eschatological mission in the world. The Church can do this more effectively, say some critics, by ministering more to the everyday experience of the laity in the world, rather than compartmentalizing the temporal and the sacred.

The history of the lay apostolate in the U.S. throughout the twentieth century has been a long and arduous process of evolution in which the Church has struggled to balance the many forces at work in complex relationships, like between the clergy and the laity, the Church to the temporal affairs of the world, church and state, and so forth. By acknowledging that these relationships are sometimes disparate and by placing them in dialogue, rather than at odds, an understanding of the Church as communion has emerged and is continuously being studied and clarified, most notably through magisterial documents. In this communion ecclesiology, the laity and the clergy both collaborate and respect the 'propria' (or realms) to which each is called to apostolate service. For the laity, this vocation is to bring the gospel to temporal affairs, whereas the clergy are called to teach, govern and sanctify the Church and her mission.

While some argue that an over-emphasis on the type of heroic, prophetic witness Dorothy Day and Chiara Lubich have exemplified has hindered the integration of faith and culture by distancing the implications of the faith from ordinary experience. However, other commentators argue that it is just this type of extraordinary witness that unifies humanity and prevents the appeal to the 'everyday' from digressing into mediocrity at best and secularism at worst. It is mainly the prophetic social witness of Focolare and the Catholic Worker that has been examined here as the model for integrating faith and culture. These

'vanguard' movements serve as an appropriate vocational model for the laity, first, because society is still largely in need of conversion of heart and dramatic change, and second, because their intentional witness has the potential to inspire with awesome power, using the most humble of means.

For both movements, the incarnate and sacramental presence of Christ in the midst of his disciples sanctifies humanity, unifying people in love, calling them to self-giving service and dignifying each person. The Holy Family is a particularly powerful inspiration and model for lay discipleship because of the competence and dignity they bring to ordinary life and work, and yet each member's example is one of self-sacrifice for the needs of others. Mary in particular is invoked as the model for all vocations, because of her willingness to say 'yes' to God, allowing God's grace-filled gifts to build on her humility, making Christ present to the world.

Focolare and the Catholic Worker embrace voluntary poverty as the means by which they demonstrate living justly through the sharing of resources for the needs of everyone, doing so out of love and compassion for those who are dispossessed. Focolare has relatively recently implemented the project "Economy of Communion," which is international in scope helps the poor help themselves, while providing an economic model based on the principles of ecclesial communion. The Catholic Worker advocated for workers by supporting

labor unions, though their radicalism, particularly their anti-industrial, anarchist, pacifist and agrarians beliefs, somewhat marginalized them from the mainstream of American Catholic support for unions. Nevertheless, the Catholic Worker, in addition to instigating early Catholic consciousness of labor issues, also maintained their steadfast prophetic witness, which was informed by principles that highlight the dignity of all people, especially the poor, and brought people together in cooperative communities of love, holiness and service. This countercultural witness has also endured, whereas the dominant liberal Catholic, or "Americanist," social ethics tradition accommodated to capitalism and large government social programs, which compromised the Church's emerging and prophetic social teachings and personal responsibility, respectively.

## CONCLUSION

This study has explored the ecclesial vocational identity of the Catholic laity in relation to communion ecclesiology and the historical and theological development of the lay apostolate through the twentieth century. As lay Catholic movements, whose formative stages coincide with the evolution of the lay apostolate, Focolare and the Catholic Worker provide diverse models for lay discipleship in the contemporary American Catholic Church. Two primary principles of the lay apostolate and communion ecclesiology have been explored to demonstrate how these two movements provide viable pastoral models. These primary principles are 1) the balancing of communitarianism and personalism and 2) the integration of faith with the social and cultural circumstances in which the laity live, especially through community life, work and social witness.

In the interest of maintaining a manageable scope, a comprehensive analysis of lay ecclesial identity, which might include issues surrounding salvation, Christology and a more thorough examination of sacramental theology, has been supplanted by a more focused approach, centering on the implications

for the apostolic mission of the Church and to expound on an understanding of the relationships inherent to that mission, comprising an ecclesiology, or understanding of Church, as communion. Magisterial sources, including papal encyclicals, conciliar documents and canon law, have been cited to show that the laity's particular vocation is to bring the gospel of Christ into temporal affairs. These magisterial documents have not really been debated so much as used as a baseline for contextualizing the issues, while the commentary of theologians and others may be used to confirm or question these teachings. The vocation of the laity is described as having a particularly secular character, or "secularity," which is distinct from secularism, which is the systematic separation or removal of religious values from society. Secularity in the theological sense has been viewed by ecclesiastical and lay apostolic leaders, like John Paul II, Chiara Lubich, and Dorothy Day, as a proper antidote to the pervasive secularism and materialism of contemporary western cultures. Secularity is rooted in the laity's baptismal identity, which joins them to Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God (God-Man), whose life, death, and resurrection restores humanity's covenant relationship with God as Trinity. The Trinitarian communion of God, which is the source of all life and self-giving love, is shared with humanity as God emptied himself and joined humanity. In Focolare terminology, this Trinitarian reality is simply phrased as "God-Love."<sup>545</sup> Focolare terms the self-sacrifice of Christ on

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<sup>545</sup> Fondi, 47.

the Cross, "Jesus Forsaken." Similarly, humanity is called to live in communion with God and with each other in the everyday circumstances in which they live, both reflecting and shaping their families, communities, work, politics, economics and worship. It is in this context that the laity are called to live out their mission to spread the Good News of Christ.

The pastoral applications to be recommended here are not intended to imitate or attempt to match Focolare and the Catholic Worker, 'stroke for stroke.' Rather, the role of movements today should be that 'vanguard,' that revolutionary front for the Church, doing extraordinary things – tilling the soil, as it were – with a few who are radically committed to setting an example, so that the larger mass of ordinary lay Catholics 'in the pews' may a) have fertile ground by which to participate in the mission of the church and b) affect real systemic change where needed. Among the groundbreaking innovations of Focolare is their economy of language, using a simple phrase, like "Jesus in the midst" or "Jesus Forsaken" to encompass a broad and multi-faceted concept that links references to the group and to an individual, as well as linking sacred concepts to those that are more practical. For example, when a group of Christians meet to discuss a school project, they can invoke "Jesus in their midst," which not only sets a tone for the meeting or the whole project, signifying that they will be conducting themselves in a Christian way, but it also recalls both the personal vocation of each person and

their identity and responsibility to the group as well. This can apply to any group which agrees to unify itself in the name of Jesus, whether their activity is specifically religious or not. This does not mean that the group has to conform to every particular aspect of Focolare's charism of unity, but the charism is there to draw from, like a living and accessible catechism, from which one can connect with the Catholic faith. Similarly, Peter Maurin's three-point program, especially 'clarification of thought' through "roundtable discussions" provides a concept by which the Catholic Worker's "aims and purposes" or some other source, perhaps one of Maurin's Easy Essays or a social encyclical, can be studied and discussed. Perhaps through such a discussion, a more unified approach to some issue or an agreed upon action might emerge. Again, this does not have to be under the auspices of the Catholic Worker, or even using a Catholic Worker resource, but those resources and that historical example are there to learn from and even imitate when appropriate.

The ordained priesthood, the hierarchy of the Church, is charged with guiding and sanctifying the communion of the Church. As baptized disciples, the clergy share with the laity a universal call to holiness, but having received Holy Orders, the hierarchy is especially called to support and form the whole Church for apostolic mission. Those concepts that comprise ecclesial communion include 1) the universal call to holiness and the equality and dignity that all

members share, and 2) all share in the Church's unified mission, which distinguishes roles based on the sacramental grace appropriate to each state of life. Since the laity have not received Holy Orders, their ecclesial identity *as laity* is defined primarily by their baptism. As the advent of the lay apostolate raised important questions about the laity's role in the apostolic mission of the Church, the Second Vatican Council, particularly through the image of the Church as the People of God, signaled a positive shift in the understanding of the laity as baptized disciples, called to a distinct yet essential role in the Church as the primary evangelizers in temporal affairs. As baptized disciples of Jesus Christ, all Christ's faithful (or *Christifideles*) share in Christ's threefold office, or *tria munera*, of priest, prophet and king. The ordained clergy share in these *munera* in a particular way in which they are called to teach (prophetic), govern (kingly) and sanctify (priestly) the Church.

Of particular note from this study, the prophetic office emerged as being of special significance because of the role modeling performed by both Focolare and the Catholic Worker, as movements, but also in particular ways through their foundresses, Chiara Lubich and Dorothy Day, by their own lives and leadership. Cardinal Newman was cited because he argued that the role of the prophet was one *munera* that held no ambiguity or paradoxical relationship for the lay Christian in the church. Although the laity may not share in the governance of

the Church or in the ministerial priesthood, the laity's prophetic role in the affairs of the world is more overt, less figurative, which only highlights the special secular nature of their vocation. As shown from the arguments of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Miller, and J.M.R. Tillard, this prophetic role is birthed through the common priesthood of the baptized, which is the mediation of Christ's paschal mystery and teachings to the world.

Day and Lubich have both been prophetic witnesses to justice, peace, and communion by speaking out, especially through their writings and public demonstrations, and by actively seeking solutions to relieve poverty, feed the hungry, advocate for the rights of workers, reconcile with 'others' and stand against war and war-making. Performing "works of mercy," both spiritual and corporal, are basic practices of both movements. Dorothy Day felt that one work of mercy had been somewhat neglected, "visiting the prisoner," but she declared that two 'equivalences' did satisfy that particular charitable work, including 1) actively advocating the amnesty of those who are persecuted politically and 2) by getting arrested and jailed firsthand.<sup>546</sup>

While the secular character of the laity, as a state of life emanating from the sacraments of initiation, has generally been clarified, future research and magisterial consideration should be given to a concept that was only proposed by the Synod on the laity in 1987, the idea of a "lay vocation," which is distinct from

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<sup>546</sup> Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 166.

marriage, priesthood, and religious life. Lubich refers to this vocation as a "Fourth Way," which is essentially a layperson who lives in the world in a permanent state of consecration and whose specific mission is within the lay apostolate. Such a vocation, if institutionalized, would likely subsume some secular religious, especially those who currently belong to secular institutes and those who have taken vows in the "Order of Consecrated Virgins."<sup>547</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar calls secular institutes "an existential, eucharistic echo in present history of the original dialogue between the triune God and Mary," which signals both the ecclesial and secular dimensions of their nature.<sup>548</sup> Fr. Enzo Fondi and Chiara Lubich have explored the connection between lay ecclesial movements, like Focolare, and the "Marian profile" or dimension of the Church's vocation and mission. The essential differences between ecclesial movements and secular institutes are juridical. Ecclesial movements are under the jurisdiction of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Otherwise, one might not know if they are at a

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<sup>547</sup> "Consecrated virgins to take vows at cathedral ceremony," *The Catholic Post* [on-line edition], August 6, 2006; available from [www.cdop.org/catholic\\_post/currentissue/news](http://www.cdop.org/catholic_post/currentissue/news). *The Catholic Post* is the diocesan newspaper of the Diocese of Peoria. "The Order of Consecrated Virgins Living in the World is one of the Catholic Church's oldest forms of consecrated life ... After Vatican II, Pope Paul VI promulgated a decree in 1970 that restored this order to the modern church. This form of consecrated life is for women living in the world who have never married or lived in open or public violation of chastity, and who give assurance by their lives and character of perseverance in chastity." Lorene Hanley Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness: The Life of Catherine de Hueck Doherty* (New York City: Alba House, 1995), 246. "Secular institutes" are under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for Religious, though they maintain some specific secular character, especially in leadership and apostolate. It was at the urging of Cardinal Montini (the future Paul VI) that Doherty pursued approval of Madonna House as a secular institute while attending the first World Congress of the Lay Apostolate in 1951.

<sup>548</sup> Juan M. Sara, "Secular Institutes According to Hans Urs Von Balthasar," *Communio* 29 (Summer 2002), 333, quoting von Balthasar.

Madonna House (a secular institute) listening house<sup>549</sup> or a Catholic Worker House of Hospitality. Sicari argues that religious congregations continue to be popularly considered the storehouses of particular communal charismata, rendering their third orders or lay associates 'dependent' and "negligible" in relation to their parental congregations of vowed religious.<sup>550</sup> Meanwhile, lay movements have the opportunity to respect their "lay context," as opposed to "trying to be 'religious' in the world."<sup>551</sup> Perhaps acknowledging this "fourth option" and giving it a proper and descriptive name would serve to give those who are committed to living their faith in the world and in an intentionally radical manner of witness a more prominent place in the Church from which they can raise awareness and assist in the coordination of lay apostolic activities and formation.

Certain traits emerged in the successive analyses of the formative developments and basic structures of Focolare and the Catholic Worker that highlight essential similarities and differences, which, considered together, enlighten the ongoing development of the lay apostolate, including those aspects that may still be lacking or in need of particular pastoral emphasis. The first

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<sup>549</sup> Leonard A. Kennedy, "Lay Movements: Part VIII (Madonna House Apostolate; includes other related news items)," *Catholic Insight* (October 1, 2001), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library~](http://www.highbeam.com/library~); Duquin, 155. Friendship House and Madonna House foundress is often referred to as the "Dorothy Day of Canada." Duquin provides a comprehensive history of Madonna House (and its forerunner, Friendship House), as well as an excellently documented and balanced biography of Catherine de Hueck Doherty.

<sup>550</sup> Sicari, 290-291.

<sup>551</sup> Ibid.

similarity is that each foundress, Dorothy Day and Chiara Lubich, both sought to promote and defend a Catholic presence in society, especially against the spread of communism.

Chiara Lubich and Focolare quickly emerged out of their initial 'first companions' group in Trent, Italy, to become an ecclesiastically approved mass movement of Catholics. Notably, they received their initial diocesan approval in 1947, just as the Popular Front was gaining momentum toward their 1948 election showdown with the Christian Democratic Party. The Christians Democrats won 49% of the seats in parliament, compared to their rival, the socialist-communist coalition, which won 31% of the seats.<sup>552</sup> The northeast of Italy, where Trent is located, is noted by Golden as a region where both Catholic and Communist "political subcultures" of "patronage" had to be intentionally "prevented" by the pre-war Fascist regime, only to have it emerge in the post-war era when both sides were liberated from suppression.<sup>553</sup> This political landscape suggests that not only was Focolare born on the political battleground (both literally and figuratively), but they and Catholic associations like them

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<sup>552</sup> Miriam A. Golden, "Electoral Connections: The Effects of the Personal Vote on Political Patronage, Bureaucracy and Legislation in Postwar Italy," *British Journal of Political Science* 22, no. 3 (April 2003), Worldwide Political Science Abstracts (1975-2006) [database on-line]; available from OSearch; first accessed online [www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/seminars/golden1.pdf](http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/seminars/golden1.pdf), 98. "This is a revised version of a paper originally prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Marriott Wardman Park, Washington, D.C. August 31- September 3, 2000." Golden teaches political science at the University of California at Los Angeles.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

represented the long arm of the Church in society. In order to have democratic credibility, this ecclesiastical voice had to come from an autonomous voice, not Catholic Action.

Similarly, the Catholic Worker was founded by Day initially to bring a Catholic presence to the Depression-era advocacy of the poor, which had been led by communists early on. In the American context, Catholics adopted and adapted the American tradition of voluntary associations, a tradition generally opposed by the Catholic hierarchy until Vatican II. Catholics were emerging within the middle class and those who came from recent European immigration were keen to Americanize. Consequently, American Catholicism throughout the twentieth century often had a somewhat contentious relationship with the Holy See, which they viewed as not catching up fast enough to modernity. Day and Maurin, however, embraced the emerging Catholic social teaching of the popes, while the mainstream of American Catholic intellectuals increasingly embraced liberalism. Nevertheless, the Catholic Worker still developed as an American Catholic voluntary association, autonomous of ecclesiastical oversight, which contributed greatly to the long-term discernment that led ultimately to a greater ecclesiastical acknowledgement of autonomous lay initiative. This autonomy distanced the lay apostolate from its original form, Catholic Action.

Consequently, much of the debate surrounding the discernment of lay initiative in the Church has dealt with appropriate roles for different states of life within the Church. On the one hand, there has been the concern among hierarchical leaders of a false sense of "clericalization" of the laity, which results from laypersons assuming ecclesial authority that properly belongs to the clergy.<sup>554</sup> On the other hand, there has been the concern, raised notably by the Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern (1977-1978), which criticized the leadership positions assumed by clergy in matters of temporal affairs, like politics.<sup>555</sup> Much pastoral energy has gone into clarifying the appropriate boundaries for every state of life over the past several decades. However, as has been shown throughout this paper, Focolare and the Catholic Worker have remained consistent unto themselves as models of lay discipleship, though each expresses its own model in ways that are both unique to themselves and consistent with the social and cultural conditions within which they developed. Among these consistencies, neither movement has denied the rightful authority of the hierarchy to protect the deposit of faith and morals. At the same time, both have articulated the need for the laity to transform their social conditions by applying the Catholic faith to temporal affairs. Similarly, both movements have intentionally expressed the values of communitarianism, particularly in their

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<sup>554</sup> CL #23.

<sup>555</sup> "A Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern."

discernment of the common good and the responsibilities of Christians to live a faithful witness of the gospel. Also, both movements have demonstrated the principles of personalism by respecting the dignity and spiritual value of the individual, notably, by reaching out to the poor and others in need. The most suitable application of these integrated principles addresses the essential problems identified by Catholic leaders as the most overarching threat to faith in contemporary society, especially secularism.

American Catholics today are not immune to the wider cultural trends of secularization,<sup>556</sup> individualism<sup>557</sup> and materialism, particularly in the developed world, but culture, along with economics, politics and media, have become so globalized that humanity is at once more interdependent than ever, but at the same time, divided in so many ways.<sup>558</sup> Throughout this study, the issues that

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<sup>556</sup> Karel Dobbelaere, "Towards an Integrated Perspective of the Processes related to the Descriptive Concept of Secularization," *Sociology of Religion* (September 22, 1999), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library~](http://www.highbeam.com/library~). Sociologist of religion Dobbelaere defines "secularization" as "a process by which the overarching and transcendent religious system of old is being reduced in a modern functionally differentiated society to a subsystem alongside other subsystems, losing in this process its overarching claims over the other subsystems."

<sup>557</sup> Ibid. Dobbelaere lists the other as factors, other than secularization, as contributing factors to the "loss of religiosity in individuals": "individualization of decisions, detraditionalization, mobility, and expressive and utilitarian individualism."

<sup>558</sup> Benjamin R. Barber, "Democracy at risk: American culture in a global culture," *World Policy Journal* (June 22, 1998), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library~](http://www.highbeam.com/library~). Barber writes, "The Americanization of world culture poses a risk to democracy because it hinders the creation of a truly globalized civil society composed of free citizens representing different cultures. While 'McWorld' does not oppose democracy, it is indifferent to it in that its sole purpose is to promote a global society made up of consumers. If no action is taken, globalization will not result in global multiculturalism or international cooperation, but in the demise of variety and democracy in the face of total consumerism." Barber is the director of the Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy at Rutgers University

plague modern and contemporary Catholicism have been addressed through the statements of Chiara Lubich, Dorothy Day, and clerical leaders in the Church. These observations have been largely general, perhaps even anecdotal. Sociologists of the religion have for several decades grappled with a number of different theories on globalization, secularization, and the influences of the marketplace on religion. Within their scholarly literature, and the investigation here is highly cursory, it becomes quickly apparent wide variance is found when scholars seek to define the terms involved and interpret measurable data from diverse societies (see note).<sup>559</sup> Dobbelaere describes the negative perception of "secularization" in religion as "resistance to functional differentiation."<sup>560</sup> In other words, religious authorities simply decry the loss of control they once held over 'functions' in society that are now specialized. For example, the Catholic Church has over the past century lost most of its actual temporal power. Surveying the various hypotheses of sociological colleagues, Dobbelaere lists mass media and "functional rationality" as possible or constituent influences some sociologists are

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<sup>559</sup> Dobbelaere, "Towards an Integrated Perspective"; Peter Beyer, "Secularization from the Perspective of Globalization: A Response to Dobbelaere," *Sociology of Religion* (September 22, 1999), High Beam Research [database on-line]; available from [www.highbeam.com/library~](http://www.highbeam.com/library~); Yves Lambert, "Religion in Modernity as a New Axial Age: Secularization or New Religious Forms," *Ibid.* The September 22, 1999 issue of the journal *Sociology of Religion* contains peer reviews in the form of scholarly conversation and historical surveys of the issues around secularization in a global culture. These include the articles cited here by Beyer, Lambert and Dobbelaere. Biographical information on Lambert and Dobbelaere was not printed in their articles available. Dobbelaere specifically notes, "Secularization is at first sight a controversial concept because of its distinct use in different disciplines, e.g., philosophy, social sciences, and theology ... Even in the social sciences, various levels of analysis of the religious situation result in different definitions and divergent evaluations of the situation."

<sup>560</sup> Dobbelaere, "Towards an Integrated Perspective."

proposing, which may be leading to the decline of religious belief and practice in individuals.<sup>561</sup> Beyer contends that if religious organizations view other "societal systems," like "politics, law, economy, science, mass media, education, and medicine" as "competition," then,

without overarching structures beyond movements and organizations, structures that bring about a broader convergence of communication such as happens in these latter systems, religion is at a distinct disadvantage. It is in this sense that pluralism points to secularization; for there are currently no such overarching structures for religion.

Beyer argues that religion survives in "modern and global circumstances" because religious organizations are not 'totalitarian' (insisting that adherents live their lives only within the religious "organizational structures").<sup>562</sup> Yet, the "disadvantage" for religious organizations, like the Catholic Church is that the faith of disciples has been largely compartmentalized away from the more everyday, secular issues. The implications of this compartmentalization, to apply the other societal systems mentioned as competition to religion include a loss of Church influence when Catholics vote; when they make medical decisions, such as taking artificial birth control; when scientific theories challenge religious faith; when Catholics choose the music, TV or movies they listen to or watch; when they make education and career decisions; and when they shop for various products or even what and how much they consume.

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<sup>561</sup> Ibid.

<sup>562</sup> Beyer, "Secularization from the Perspective of Globalization."

From an ecclesiastical perspective, Yves Lambert provides a hopeful forecast, suggesting that the tide may be turning away from the dispossession of ecclesiastical authority in society that modernity affected in the manner that Dobbelaere suggested above. Lambert defines the first two "thresholds" of this process as 1) the modern separation of religion from civil society to 2) the current situation of localized religious vitality and, in some industrialized societies, religious resurgence, including "parareligious beliefs," such as the phenomenon of "believing without belonging," or privatized spirituality.<sup>563</sup> He further suggests that the developed world could be on the verge of a "third threshold," which he calls "pluralistic secularization," where

religion has the same ascendancy upon society and life as any other movement or ideology, but can also play a role outside of its specific function and have an influence outside of the circle of believers as an ethical and cultural resource ... this seems possible only if religion can respect individual autonomy and democratic pluralism.<sup>564</sup>

Such acceptance of 'individual autonomy and democratic pluralism,' Lambert continues, demands that religious institutions also accept what Dobbelaere cites as the very cause of religious conflict over secularization, "functional differentiation."<sup>565</sup> In the context of this project, the Catholic Church has made great strides toward crossing this "threshold" by clarifying ecclesial communion, especially in terms secular character of the lay vocation. Neo-conservatives will

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<sup>563</sup> Lambert, "Religion in Modernity as a New Axial Age."

<sup>564</sup> Ibid.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid.

jump on such a conclusion to argue that this 'differentiation' should apply to all "worldly matters, like money and power," and the hierarchy should just stick to faith and morals.<sup>566</sup> Such a position defies the examples of the Catholic Worker and Focolare, because it is a position of separation, rather than communion. While a certain level of differentiation is called for in communion ecclesiology, the relationships that are most organic to the 'body' of Christ, as has been shown, are those which remain in states of 'creative tension,' marked by dialogue between the secular and the sacred and the personal and the collective.

The Church's communion demands a balancing of distinctive relationships, which, rather than being in a state of conflict, can and should be held in a creative and undulating tension of right relationships, of ongoing dialogue, through reciprocal love. Among these relationships, in addition to that of the laity and the clergy, is the relationship between communitarianism and personalism. On their own, communitarianism and personalism are inherently integrated. The search for the common good is rooted in the notion of inclusion, which means that those who are dispossessed of rights and of sufficient material goods must be empowered by charitable service to lift themselves up, so that the inherent dignity they possess as children of God can be realized through public participation in civil society, whether that is in politics, labor, or family life. Such a

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<sup>566</sup> David J. O'Brien, "What Happened to the Catholic Left?" in *What's Left? Liberal American Catholics*, ed. Mary Jo Weaver (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 258.

balance of community life and personal dignity means that subsidiarity must be practiced, so that the participation of each person is meaningfully valued at a local level. All of these dimensions are amply demonstrated, for example, through Focolare's Economy of Communion and the Catholic Worker's heroic efforts in advocating justice for the poor and for workers.

For a believing Catholic, one's faith in the nature of God as Trinity and Jesus as the incarnate Word of God, who died and resurrected to restore humanity back to God's mysterious, creative design, demands recognition that each baptized disciple, appropriate to his or her state of life, is called to share in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal office. While the roles of lay and cleric may be distinguished by their function, the apostolic mission to transform society into the Kingdom of God is one of unity and evangelical, public witness that ensures that the Risen Christ is present and at work through his disciples, here-and-now. Droel and Pierce state, "Lay people must realize that their daily work is the primary means by which they help bring about the kingdom of God."<sup>567</sup> They anchor this argument by quoting John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens* (1981), where the pope declares at the end of the document,

Let the Christian who listens to the word of the living God, uniting work with prayer, know the place that his work has not only in earthly progress but also in the development of the kingdom of God.<sup>568</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Droel and Pierce, 41.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid., quoting John Paul II, "On Human Work" #27.

Droel and Pierce continue, "confident lay people, doing what they are supposed to be doing and doing it well, are as holy as any monk in the monastery."<sup>569</sup> Could this be the type of "spiritual cloister" Lubich is referring to above? It is particularly interesting that Droel and Pierce compare the contemplative monk to the working person, because Gerard Foley points directly to the western monastic tradition of "*ora et labora*" as a key source for integrating the sacred with the secular, the church with the 'world.'<sup>570</sup> The most important connection to be made between Foley's allusion and this present study is that Foley affirms the balance of contemplative spirituality with activism and service as being particularly natural and necessary to the secular vocation of the laity. Foley states, "When faith is related to action, the innate dignity of the person becomes a central reality."<sup>571</sup> Similarly, while the witness of movements may tend toward the 'heroic,' lay disciples need not feel that their ordinary lives are any less prophetic, when they 'do what they do well' with a spirit of charity and prayer and an awareness that they are participating in God's unfolding creation and cooperating with its fulfillment.

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<sup>569</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>570</sup> Foley, 70-71.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid., 80.

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R002592772