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Dorothy Day & the NYTimes

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Distinctly Catholic

I suppose hoping that the New York Times is capable of seeing anything except in terms of the standard, and now boring, left v. right divide, is hoping for too much. So, it was fun to read this article in the Times about Cardinal Dolan's fervent support for the canonization of Day. But, no one except the Times has an excuse for trying to enlist Day as their champion in any intra-ecclesial wars. If you do so, and it comes to my attention, I shall call you out. Cardinal Francis George came perilously close to this egregious attempt to turn Day into a partisan for his cause du jour. Some on the left have been invoking Day in ways that would have made her extremely uncomfortable too.

The thing to know about Dorothy Day is not where she fell on the ideological spectrum, it is that she chose to follow Jesus radically, right down to the core of her life, the rhythms of her day, the habits of her heart, the fervency of her prayers. She was intensely loyal to the Church, but not above criticizing some of its potentates. She was suspicious of power in any form, except the power of Jesus' love. She understood, and lived, the call to both love and serve the poor in ways that shame the rest of us. She is undoubtedly a saint. She is also undoubtedly not fit fodder for anyone's ideological cannon.

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