

Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day were co-founders of the **Catholic Worker Movement**, one of the most radical and enduring social justice movements in American Catholic history. It has been said that “Peter had the ideas, and Dorothy had the voice and organizing power.” Together, they brought to life a practical and spiritually dynamic vision of care and compassion.

In a cramped building on the Lower East Side of New York City, Dorothy Day lived out the radical hospitality that defined her life. The noise, the chaos—the crying child upstairs, the arguments over rent; all these did not disrupt her mission; they were the very fabric of it. In 1934, during the heart of the Great Depression, Dorothy’s days were filled with simple acts: pouring coffee for the forgotten, offering cots to sleep on to the homeless, saying yes without hesitation to every plea for help. Alongside Peter Maurin, whose vision of houses of hospitality shaped the Catholic Worker movement, Dorothy embraced a life of voluntary poverty, rooted not in idealism but in relentless, practical love. She did not demand gratitude or worthiness from those she served. Instead, she operated on a complete trust that there would always be just enough to share, and that if there wasn’t, then the sharing of what there was would itself be the miracle.

Interestingly, when Pope Francis addressed a joint session of the U.S. Congress in 2015, he mentioned **Dorothy Day** as part of a reflection on Americans he admired for their commitment to building a better society. For Pope Francis, working to feed others defined the Christian faith that Dorothy Day espoused.

In John 21 we find Jesus speaking directly to this approach to living out the Gospel. The writer Fredrick Beuchner highlights the dramatic setting John provides us, describing how “The darkness” [through which the fishermen make their way]...is broken by the flicker of a charcoal fire on the sand. Jesus has made it. He cooks some fish on it for his old friends’ breakfast. On the horizon there are the first pale traces of the sun getting ready to rise.”

Having advised them on where to catch fish, Jesus prepares them their own meal of fish and bread. Perhaps what we have here is one of the earliest examples of cooking as a person’s love language. In the act of Jesus feeding them, the disciples know instinctively that they are in the presence of the risen Christ.

And then, after the meal, Jesus begins an interesting dialogue with Simon Peter. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves him. Each time Peter responds with, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." The passage says that Peter felt hurt when Jesus asked him for the third time, "Do you love me?" But remember, it was Peter who three times denied he even knew Jesus when Jesus was being interrogated and tortured.

Peter's confirmation of love is consistently responded to by Jesus with a clear directive "If you do love me, then feed my sheep". For Jesus, love of the Christ must lead to doing as he has done for them. As he has fed them, now they must feed others.

Of course, there is a literal need to feed people as Dorothy Day demonstrated. Physical hunger is an urgent need in this world, and many suffer malnutrition and serious ill health because of insufficient access to good food. But there are also other kinds of hunger that people live with. Some of us hunger for courage, some for control. The list is endless, really: hunger for approval, security, safety, order, predictability, balance, calm, acceptance, freedom, quiet, happiness, health, meaning, purpose.

When Jesus says, “Feed my sheep” he means “provide not only physical sustenance, but also spiritual and emotional sustenance.” The question is: What does that look like? What does it look like to feed the whole person?

In Buddhism, hungry ghosts are the parts of us that are driven by intense emotional needs or unfulfilled cravings, particularly for food, drink, or sensual pleasures. They are often depicted as having huge, distended bellies with tiny, needle-thin necks or mouths, making it impossible to satisfy their hunger. Hungry ghosts represent the consequences of greed, addiction, jealousy, and unchecked desire; a constant state of suffering, frustration, and craving.

In contrast to unwholesome craving there is a Buddhist concept of positive, skillful desire. It refers to the motivated intention to do good, learn, meditate, or grow spiritually and emotionally. This includes a deep longing or urgency to wake up from ignorance and delusion.

Buddhism encourages balance: neither indulging every hunger nor denying all desire. The Middle Way navigates between extremes, guiding people to

discern between destructive craving and helpful aspiration. Healthy hungers, in Buddhism, are rooted in wisdom, compassion, and non-attachment. Jesus teaches a similar lesson. He makes it very clear here that we must respond to all who hunger (notice it could be any hunger) with love.

I'm reading a book by psychologist Richard Schwartz called No Bad Parts and he insists that There are no "bad parts" of the human psyche, just parts in need of healing. "...Love" he says "is the answer in the inner world, just as it is in the outer world. Listening to, embracing, and loving parts allows them to heal and transform..." Schwartz, pg. 17.

We need to learn together how to identify our hunger / and how to determine if it's healthy. We need to embrace that hunger, especially if it's something that needs healing and transformation. If you stopped for just a moment and internally named your hunger, what would you call it, and is it something in need of healing or is it a healthy aspiration? Just complete this sentence in your mind: "I am hungry for...."

Having asked ourselves that question we might also wonder what the hunger is of those around us, and, if it's possible to do so, how we might respond to their needs with love? This, I believe, is an example of what it looks like to be Resurrection People. We seek new life again and again in ourselves and in one another. We look for the presence of the risen Christ with us as we name, investigate, and if needed, adjust our own hunger. We feed one another, by embodying the love of Christ, as we engage in this process of growth.

Jesus closes out his teaching here with a frank observation. He says that we must feed people now, while we can, because we will not always have the agency to do so. When we were younger, he says, we used to fasten our own belt, and go wherever we wished. But as we grow old, we stretch out our hands, and someone else fastens a belt around us and takes us where we might not wish to go. This is not just a random thought about aging. No, Jesus pairs this with his instruction to feed his sheep. He wants us to recognize that we will not always be able to do the good work that needs to be done. We will not always be able to discern our own hunger or the hunger of others, so now is the time to care for one another. Now is the time to ask about each other's hunger. Now is the time to work together to

heal and empower one another. This is the call of Christ. Do you love me?
Then feed my sheep. May we love one another enough to meet all hunger
with compassion and care. Amen.