



Pure Means vs. Supernatural Means? On the Solidarity and Differences between Jacques Maritain and Dorothy Day

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Abstract

This paper clarifies the full extent of the differences between Jacques Maritain and Dorothy Day on pacifism and anarchism in the light of their solidarity. I argue that their differences were primarily due to the particular challenges they faced in their specific vocation arising from the World War II context, and secondarily due to their different understandings of the relationship between nature and grace. While Day became drawn to a concrete heroic life of the supernatural virtues under the guidance of her spiritual director John Hugo, Maritain aimed to philosophically elucidate all the possible means available to modern Christians which may contribute to a historical realization of the Christian ideal. Their theological difference on nature and grace did not constitute a fundamental rift if taking into account the role of conscience as the essential element of a person's dignity, where the spiritual life takes shape and discernments are made. The pure means of the philosopher and the supernatural means of the saint are united in the Christian who is willing to give all for the object of their love.

Keywords

Jacques Maritain, Dorothy Day, Catholic Worker, anarchism, Integral humanism, Church and State, nonviolence, pacifism

Introduction

Dorothy Day and Jacques Maritain enjoyed a deep friendship with one another with a mutual admiration that lasted to the end of their lives., Day's message of condolence to Jacques on the passing of Raissa Maritain in 1960 read, "The two of you reminded us always of the beauty

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of wisdom, and of love. ... we grieve and we love you for all you have meant to the world."¹ Maritain, for his part, showed unwavering support for Day and her Catholic Worker movement since its very inception. Both Christian personalists, Day and Maritain shared an insistence on the primacy of the spiritual, a similar critique of communism and capitalism, a devotion to the cause of social equality, and a deep confidence in the common people as the source of renewal. Maritain's books *Freedom in the Modern World* (1933), *Integral Humanism* (1936), *The Person and the Common Good* (1947), and *Man and the State* (1951), all of them frequently cited by *The Catholic Worker* well into the eighties, were significant influences on Day and the CW movement.

Yet the two disagreed on the issues of pacifism and anarchism, for Maritain stopped short of excluding from his political philosophy the possible use of force, and believed that there was room for collaboration between Christians and the modern state in working towards his vision of a new Christendom. Though neither Maritain nor Day publicly discussed these differences, other voices in the CW such as Robert Ludlow and Michael Harrington have criticized Maritain for failing to carry his own philosophical principles to their logical conclusion and embrace a strict pacifism and anarchism, even while using these principles to develop the CW's own position.²

This paper seeks to clarify the full extent of the differences between Maritain and Day in the light of their solidarity. I will argue that with World War II as a historical moment of crystallization Maritain and Day ended up with a different approach to modern problems primarily because of the different challenges they faced in their specific vocation, and secondarily because of their different understandings of the relationship between nature and grace. While Day became drawn to a concrete heroic life of the supernatural virtues under the guidance of her spiritual director John Hugo, Maritain aimed to philosophically elucidate all the possible means available to modern Christians which may contribute to a historical realization of the Christian ideal. Their different understandings of nature and grace did not constitute a fundamental rift if taking into account the role of interior discernment, for both honored conscience as the essential element of a person's dignity, where the spiritual life takes shape and discernments are made. The philosopher and the Servant of God on a profound level appreciated each other, with Maritain providing Day with a lucid vision of a

¹ Bernard E. Doering, 'Jacques Maritain's Friendship with Dorothy Day,' *New Oxford Review* 52 (December 1985), p. 22.

² See, for instance, Robert Ludlow, 'Review of *The Person and the Common Good*,' *The Catholic Worker* XIV, no. 10 (Jan 1948), p. 4; Ludlow, 'A Libertarian Approach,' *The Catholic Worker* XVII, no. 10 (April 1951), p. 1; Michael Harrington, 'Review of *Man and State*,' *The Catholic Worker* XVII, no. 11 (May, 1951), p. 4; Harrington, 'Operation—Peace,' *The Catholic Worker* XVIII, no. 3 (Oct 1951), p. 1.

constructive integration between urgent social concerns and a traditional Catholic spirituality, and with Day being a concrete manifestation of the type of heroic souls Maritain had called for in his political vision.³

I will begin by delineating the shared vision between the two in the 1930s of a new Christendom. The second section will explain their difference in anarchism and pacifism from the perspective of their different vocations in the context of the Second World War. The third section will analyze the deeper theological issue separating the two: the relationship between nature and grace. I will argue that this difference may be largely overcome by an appeal to conscience. The fourth section will recapture the function of pure means and supernatural means in the thoughts of the two, and argue for an overall compatibility between the terms.

1. Purification of Means in the 1930s

Two of Maritain's works from this decade had a lasting influence on Day and the CW: *Freedom in the Modern World* (*Freedom* hereinafter) and *Integral Humanism*. *Freedom* was listed as one of Day's all-time favorite, most-recommended books.⁴ Stanley Vishnewski recalled in 1973 that Maritain's teaching on *pure means* (from *Freedom*) "was one of the cornerstones of the philosophy of the Catholic Worker" and that "[h]is maxim 'Victory or defeat with pure means is always a victory' was imbedded in our way of thinking and our activities."⁵ In June 1955, when Day gave a public speech during her civil disobedience protest against the air raid drill she cited a quote from Maritain's *Integral Humanism* as an inspiration.⁶ Written during the grave social upheaval of the thirties, these works likely resonated with Day for two reasons: his integral and theocentric humanism was a summary challenge to the false promises of capitalism, fascism and communism as well as to the

³ Jacques Maritain, 'Freedom in the Modern World,' in Otto Bird, ed., *Integral Humanism, Freedom in the Modern World, and A Letter on Independence* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), p. 74, and *Integral Humanism*, p. 228.

⁴ Doering, 'Jacques Maritain's Friendship with Dorothy Day,' p. 20.

⁵ Stanley Vishnewski, 'J. Maritain: An Appreciation,' *The Catholic Worker* XXXIX, no. 5 (June 1973), p. 1.

⁶ Dorothy Day, 'Where Are the Poor? They Are in Prisons, Too,' *The Catholic Worker* XXII, no. 1 (July 1955), p. 8. The quote says: "We are turning towards men, to speak and act among them, on the temporal plane, because, by our faith, by our baptism, by our confirmation, tiny as we are, we have the vocation of infusing into the world, wheresoever we are, the sap and savor of Christianity." In a note written to Maritain in the following year Day says: "I think of you often and pray for you often with love. Your writings have meant so much to us here. Did you see my quotation from *True Humanism* which I used in our demonstration of Civil Disobedience last June? Thank you for your good help..." See Doering, 'Jacques Maritain's Friendship with Dorothy Day,' p. 20.

social inaction of the Church, and he demonstrated the necessity for the purification of means in any Christian-styled revolution. The latter treatment on pure means would be particularly important to Day because it called Christians to a higher standard of action than accepted by secular revolutionaries such as the Communists. We will look at these two aspects in turn.

First, Maritain makes trenchant observations on the shortcomings of several modern entities: the Church, the modern State, and secular revolutionaries. The Church in the age of the Counter Reformation and of the Concordats accepted by practice, though not by her teaching, a kind of dualism between the temporal and spiritual planes. She formed concordats with secular powers through a type of Machiavellian politics while making terms with sin through a pessimistic judgment of human nature.⁷ Her failures in this age partially contributed to the later establishment of a division of labor by the post-Revolution bourgeois State, in which the temporal welfare of society was given exclusively to the care of secular social-political institutions. Consequently, the Church seemed to serve predominantly the interests of the rich and powerful. The State in its turn existed in “an organized system of sin,” where a small group of men—the military—were asked to “sacrifice[d] their virtue on the altar of public welfare in much the same way that prostitutes are asked to sacrifice their honor to maintain the peace of families.”⁸ Revolutionaries who strove against the State were not much better, for they often fanned into flames the basest of human passions in order to advance their movement: envy, hatred, fear rather than love. Fundamentally at stake in these secular conflicts, Maritain believes, is the freedom of autonomy the modern world so desires but often confounds with a superficial freedom of choice. With an erroneous perception of freedom comes the willingness to abandon moral and spiritual integrity for the sake of apparent gain, a mistake only a Christian social revolution could remedy. This would be a moral and spiritual revolution which first of all takes place in the depth of the heart.

Second, the means of this Christian revolution must be purified through the Christian faith. It would not be the combination of a collectivist revolution of the Communists followed by a personalist revolution, as some in the thirties would naively suggest. It would aim not predominantly for the destruction of the existing order but for an organic growth of a new social reality. The pure means proposed by Maritain refers primarily but not exclusively to what he calls organic means of edification, spiritually infused means directed to the spontaneous change of society. There is in fact a hierarchy of means: purely spiritual means such as prayer and fasting, poor temporal means

⁷ Maritain, ‘Freedom in the Modern World,’ p. 82.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 82–3.

or spiritual means directed to the temporal order and imbued with the theological virtues, and rich temporal means or material means directly aimed at sociopolitical solutions.⁹ All these means should be “disposed and disciplined” by the Christian spirit of sanctity, with poor temporal means being the most important. Gandhi’s *Satyagraha*—truth power through non-violent resistance—is an example of such. This hierarchy of means lays the framework of a practical vision in which the spiritual energy of the Church is sown and grown in a universal diaspora through spiritual teachings, philosophical and theological conversations, acts of Christian charity, and political engagement.

However, Maritain does not categorically reject the use of force and coercion. If the time comes when sufficient momentum has been built organically toward a new and just society, a decisive moment of physical force might be necessary to bring about the final restructuring. This material means of coercion is secondary to the means of edification and spiritual means, but it could play a necessary and justified role when properly purified “by the prescription of justice and prudence,” possibly “reduced ... to the dimension of the little sling of David” which is substantially different from the great “engines of sin” on which materialist revolutionaries depend.¹⁰ Maritain’s acceptance of force in this framework was and is not, I argue, contradictory to Day’s pacifism, which appeared as early as 1933.¹¹ The reason for this non-contradiction is two-fold. First, the overall intention of Maritain’s projects in the 1930s was to rationalize a Christian alternative to secular revolutions by urging the primacy of the spiritual. Second, his allowance for aggression, or what he calls “courage in attack,” applied only to the theoretical scenario where force would be the final step toward the realization of a just society, revealing his fundamental sympathies with the suffering masses similar to Day’s own. A case in point is the Catholic Worker’s positive response to Castro’s revolution in 1959. Day and the Worker argued that the violence done by Castro “was less evil than the violence used by those who oppressed the poor.”¹² Later when visiting Cuba herself for a firsthand perspective, Day likened Castro in his manner of speaking to none other than her friend and co-founder Peter Maurin, and “was impressed by what seemed a spirit of hope among the people.”¹³ Day’s pacifism was

⁹ Ibid., pp. 71, 86, 99.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 97.

¹¹ In October 1933 the Catholic Worker stated that its delegates would “be among those present at the US Congress against War” representing Catholic pacifism, see William D. Miller, *A Harsh and Dreadful Love* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2005), p. 159.

¹² Thomas Bokenkotter, *Church and Revolution: Catholics in the Struggle for Democracy and Social Justice* (NY: Image Books, 1998), p. 430.

¹³ Ibid., p. 431.

somewhat softened in this instance because like Maritain she had a natural inclination to side with the disadvantaged and the vulnerable.

To sum up this section, I have argued that Maritain and Day were kindred spirits with a common vision for a non-secular type of revolution in an age rife with revolutionary impulses. The preferred course of action for both at this time was one of organic edification of society through concrete acts of the Christian spirit. This social vision would persist for both Maritain and Day till the end, even though the events of World War II would reveal a not insignificant difference in their attitude toward the State and its use of arms.

2. The Works of War

The friendship and solidarity between Maritain and Day deepened throughout the thirties and the forties. Almost every time he passed through New York Maritain would visit the *Catholic Worker*, and his speeches at their evening meetings would attract large crowds.¹⁴ At the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War Maritain and Day, along with *Commonweal* and the diocesan *Buffalo Echo*, stood together as the only Catholic voices in the United States opposing Franco. The CW was asked by Maritain to publish a brochure of his collected texts on the subject, which nonetheless did not materialize, but the introduction to the brochure did come to print in Jan 1939. Accompanied by an editor's note that the position of the CW was substantially the same as Maritain's, the introduction called for a neutral stance from the Church, and for an alternative solution of conciliation with a special regard for the welfare of the masses and the poor.¹⁵ The question of means was raised, and excesses on both sides of the conflict were criticized.

The historical context would eventually lead Maritain and Day to a different conclusion on pacifism and anarchism. Debates on the Spanish Civil War inspired the founding of the CW's first pacifist organization, formally announced as the Pax group in 1937. But after the start of WWII Day's pacifist stance met with the fiercest challenge, during which she came to a theological consolidation on pacifism through the guidance of the retreat master John Hugo. Though Day's retreat experience with Hugo, beginning in July 1941, did not induce a "quantum leap" in Day's thought, it did confirm and solidify a resolute spiritual path toward an intense life of interiority devoted to the supernatural virtues. Upon return from that first retreat, Day remarked of it: "I think it will cure all ills, settle all problems, bind up all wounds, strengthen

¹⁴ Doering, 'Jacques Maritain's Friendship with Dorothy Day,' p. 20.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 22–3.

us, enlighten us, and in other words make us happy.”¹⁶ Under the guidance of Hugo Day came to embrace the supernatural means of charity as the only desirable means for the cause of renewal she was to carry out through the CW. Meanwhile for Maritain, his beloved France came under siege by Hitler’s forces and he was exiled to the United States in 1940 with his family, Raissa and her sister Vera. With help from the US government Maritain broadcasted messages of encouragement to France beginning in 1941, and was actively involved in political conversations with General de Gaulle about French resistance and the future of France. His postwar political engagement as French ambassador to the Holy See, president of the UNESCO conference in Mexico, and contributor to the UN Declaration of Human Rights is well known. In this section I will argue that the difference between Maritain and Day was primarily due to the particular paths to which their vocations had led them.

Entering deeply into the theological challenges posed by social inequality in America, the injustice of conscription laws, capitalism, and western imperialism, Day was eventually drawn to the supernatural means of charity modeled by the Sermon on the Mount as a way of fighting “the real battle”—against what Hugo called “history’s movement toward a spiritless objectivization and violence.”¹⁷ Maritain, on the other hand, concerned with the liberation and rebuilding of France, the restoration of its spiritual vocation, anti-semitism, and the collaboration of postwar countries toward a new world order, looked positively to the democratic government whose particular American form had given war-time shelter to both his family and his country, and remained focused on the active construction of a common good which cannot realistically exclude the means of force due to the fact of evil. Day pursued the just peace offered by the Prince of Peace, the only lasting peace that is unfortunately scorned by the world, while Maritain devoted himself to the cause of a terrestrial common good maximally supportive of the personal good in the desire that each person can have the space to pursue the transcendent eternal good, God.

Day’s theological concerns can be gathered by the arguments she used to support her pacifism. The mentorship of Hugo marked a clear difference in the ways she engaged these arguments. Before Hugo she mostly marshalled various types of just war reasoning, while afterwards she focused on fighting the real battle with “weapons of the spirit,” a term coined by Hugo. Before 1940 the articles published by the CW often approached the war as a continuation of World War I fueled by the greedy materialism of capitalists, the idolatry of

¹⁶ Ben T. Peters, *Called to Be Saints: John Hugo, the Catholic Worker, and a Theology of Radical Christianity* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2016), pp. 39–40.

¹⁷ Miller, *A Harsh and Dreadful Love*, p. 164.

nationalism, and the opportunistic profiteering of oligarchs.¹⁸ Likewise blamed were British imperialism, the class warfare mentality of the Communists, and self-serving politicians protecting the status quo. As the war continued, it became clear that its exact nature had been misapprehended. With America joining the war in 1939, pressure mounted on Day from many sides to reconsider her absolute pacifism. Sometime in 1941, Day received a note from Hugo urging her to develop a doctrinal foundation for her stance:

No doubt [pacifism] is all clear to you; but then you have not tried to work it out doctrinally. If you knew no theology, it would probably be simpler to make a solution. Yet the decision must be based on doctrine. Pacifism must proceed from truth, or it cannot exist at all. And of course this attack on conscription is the most extreme form of pacifism.¹⁹

One can glimpse in this note the formative role Hugo would play in Day's theological development. The doctrine for pacifism Hugo nudged Day to formulate would come from his own inspirations. Beginning in 1941 Hugo's articles on conscription and conscientious objection would frequently appear in the CW, with a running theme of fighting the real battle against "the ultimate problem of objectivization" through weapons of the spirit.²⁰ According to Day and the CW, Hugo was the one who provided "the definitive and most forthright statement" on the subject of Catholic conscientious objection.²¹ William Miller believes that Day's theology of pacifism under the guidance of Hugo was essentially a personalist response to the problem of objectivization: the modern world unmoored from its last end cannot help but gravitate to violence.²² The solution that she fastened onto was the supernatural act of love, the higher way of Jesus, the "straight way of bringing heaven on earth" which would require a great deal of suffering.²³ In Jan 1942 shortly after Pearl Harbor, the CW reaffirmed their pacifist stand against the dominant national pro-war sentiment. In response to critics charging her with neglecting America's duty to defend decent human values, Day referred them to the CW's ten years of work fighting for those values. She then questioned why the CW's fight against poverty and discrimination was not recognized by middle class America, and why Americans were not concerned about values when a black was "shot and dragged by a mob through the streets behind a car," lit on fire while still alive, and left dead on the street.²⁴

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 160–61.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 166. Original source of this note remains unclear.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 164.

²¹ Peters, *Called to Be Saints*, pp. 181–82.

²² Miller, *A Harsh and Dreadful Love*, p. 167.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 173.

In Dec 1942 Day published Hugo's article titled "We Do Not War According to the Flesh."

The issues that bothered Day remained the same throughout: social inequality and injustice in America and abroad, and she found their most powerful cure in the supernatural means of charity. This cure was simultaneously the only path to union with God. Her absolute pacifism was a statement that true peace and true life were found only in the love of God. Day's own mention of an increasing attraction to the modern-day mystic Therese of Lisieux after her retreat experience was instructive. While Teresa of Avila was her earlier model who lived an equally mystical and activist life, Day grew more inclined toward the inactivity of Therese: "I could see clearly the difference between the two Teresas and I came to the conclusion that St. Therese of Lisieux's was the loftier vocation, the harder and more intense life... By doing nothing she did everything. She let loose powers, consolations, and streams of faith, hope and love that will never cease to flow."²⁵ This shift in her spiritual life led to the conviction that pacifism was the most powerful means to bring about social transformation.

If Day's spiritual vocation was becoming more interiorized,²⁶ Maritain, on the other hand, ever more engaged himself in the global social-political sphere. In the post-war context he would argue that democracy was the best form of government and that the terrestrial common good was a *bonum honestum*, an ultimate end in its own right albeit subordinate to God who is the absolute ultimate end.²⁷ This affirmation of democracy and his belief that the modern State had something good to contribute despite the grim reality of its method of coercion had something to do with his French nationalism informed by his religious approach to the history of France as a Thomist philosopher. In a 1941 book titled *France My Country: Through the Disaster*, Maritain spoke of the fierce undying faith of all the French in the vocation of their country. Though not a supernatural theological faith, it was deeply connected to the perceived spiritual destiny of France. He quoted Pius X who compared France to Saul, who though chastised severely on account of her sins would not perish but eventually be lifted up by God: "Go, first-born daughter of the Church, chosen nation, vase of election, go carry, as in the past, My Name before all peoples and

²⁵ Mel Piehl, *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), p. 89.

²⁶ The change in the spiritual life of Dorothy Day was "one of emphasis rather than a complete turn of direction," as her dedication to the CW movement in all its social dimensions never abated, see *ibid.*

²⁷ Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State* (Chicago: Illinois, The University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 62; Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1966), p. 53.

kings of the earth.”²⁸ France was the soil on which the Virgin appeared more than anywhere else. It was the country which Joan of Arc sacrificed her life to save and which “she expressly asked her king to donate to the King of Heaven.”²⁹ Maritain believed in the religious vocation of France, which was not in his mind unrelated to its temporal vocation. His hopes for France contributed to his understanding that WWII was a just war necessarily waged for the freedom of nations. The fall of France to Germany he blamed partially on its failure to adequately prepare itself for the German invasion. Due to the existence of evil, modern democracies must not be “too badly prepared” for “savages armed to the teeth.”³⁰ The strength of nations can coexist with justice, for “the power of nations struggling for freedom can be ... greater than that of nations struggling for enslavement.”³¹ The slaughter of the Jews by Hitler similarly influenced Maritain, whose wife Raissa was a Russian-born Jewess, in his conviction that military defense was necessary in the face of evil.

In the end, the difference between Maritain and Day on anarchism and pacifism was rooted in the issues and concerns with which they were occupied. Day entered deeply into the spiritual battle that sowed the very seed of discord among those who ought to be brothers and sisters in Christ, while Maritain continued to envision the best possible temporal order in which evil was kept at bay and personal freedom upheld. Day was steeping ever more resolutely into the supernatural plane of spiritual solutions while Maritain remained focused on the natural plane of temporal welfare. Such a contextual reading does not mean to smooth away all theological differences between the two, for indeed there is a significant one: their understanding of the relationship between nature and grace, the natural sphere and the supernatural. To this difference I will now turn.

3. On the Supernatural Means, or the Relationship between Nature and Grace

Day’s week-long retreat with Hugo at St. Anthony’s village in 1941—called by Harvey Egan her second conversion³²—revolved around a particular theological interpretation of the relationship between nature and grace. Against a theological dualism dominant in the first part of the twentieth century, Hugo built on the contributions of Henri de

²⁸ Jacques Maritain, *France My Country: Through the Disaster* (NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1941), p. 115.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 42.

³¹ Maritain, *Man and the State*, p. 60.

³² Peters, *Called to Be Saints*, p. 19.

Lubac and distinguished three levels of human existence: the sinful life (marked by disobedience to God, guided by appetite, and destined for perdition), the natural life (consisting of natural activities, guided by human reason, and hypothetically destined for a natural beatitude), and the supernatural life (marked by divine charity, guided by faith, and destined for the Kingdom of Heaven).³³ A common error, according to Hugo, was to regard the natural life as sufficiently good, when on the contrary it was inherently unstable, imperfect, and insufficient for attaining our last end, the supernatural beatitude. Those who wished for heaven should not remain satisfied with a natural life merely safe from the dangers of mortal sin, for even imperfections would separate us from the love of God. As Day wrote in her retreat notes, we should have the spirit of St. Ignatius and prefer death to the act of a venial sin, for it would be impossible to remain in a state of grace without desiring ultimate perfection.³⁴ The way to live a supernatural life is through an ascetical detachment from all natural goods and the transformation of one's activities through a supernatural motive. The only end for Christians to pursue is the supernatural end, and the only means to do so is the supernatural means of charity, faith, and grace.

On the issue of pacifism, this model of nature and grace teaches that while participation in a just war may be a naturally justified good, it should be treated as an "indifferent sample," an imperfect action similar to smoking and drinking which, though not inherently sinful, if repeatedly done would lead one astray from the love of God.³⁵ Participation in a just war would be at best a natural action. In no way could it be holy or lead to the supernatural.³⁶ In this doctrine of samples Day found the ultimate rationale for her absolute pacifism: unless a natural good leads one to the contemplation of God, it should be sown or pruned in order to reap the greater supernatural good.³⁷

Maritain does not teach the abandonment of all natural goods for the sake of the supernatural. The terrestrial common good to him is an ultimate end, "good in itself."³⁸ While this good is indirectly ordained and subordinate to the absolute ultimate good—God, it is not simply a means to an end, not a sample to tasted and left behind. More than a system of utilities, the common good consists of

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 58–9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 565.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 83. Besides indifferent samples, there are forbidden samples which are always sinful, necessary samples which provide for our basic needs, and captivating samples which are attractions to particular creatures.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

³⁷ In her retreat notes she wrote: "Sow creature, possess Creator. Sow pleasures, reap happiness. Sow our life, reap life eternal." See *ibid.*, p. 509.

³⁸ Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, p. 53.

not only: the collection of public commodities and services.... a sound fiscal condition of the state and its military power; the body of just laws, good customs, and wise institutions... the heritage of its great historical remembrances, its symbols and its glories, its living traditions and cultural treasures. ... it includes also, and above all, the whole sum itself of these.... It includes the sum or sociological integration of all the civic conscience, political virtues and senses of right and liberty, of all the activity, material prosperity and spiritual riches, of unconsciously operative hereditary wisdom, or moral rectitude, justice, friendship, happiness, virtue and heroism in the individual lives of its members.³⁹

The common good is a substantial ethical good worthy of being defended at the cost of individual goods, because in its essence it is directly ordered to the maximum developmental potential of the members of society. Maritain develops a distinction between the individual and the personal. The good of a human being as an individual, as a part to a whole, is subordinate to the common good of society, yet the good of the human person, due to his/her fundamental spiritual dignity, is superior to the common good and should be directly served by it. The highest supernatural good, the spiritual communion between a person and God, transcends both individual goods and the common good. Through each person's communion with God the eternal society and the spiritual fellowship of the saints are born. In this hierarchy of goods, one may justly and heroically sacrifice one's individual goods including the earthly life for the sake of the common good (his people and his country). Such would be an "act of extraordinary virtue" in which despite the complete sacrifice of one's temporal goods the person is not defeated, nor his/her soul lost, because it is immortal.⁴⁰

The theological difference between Day and Maritain may be partially reconciled by appealing to the authority of conscience. The heroic asceticism embraced by Day, a super-human indifference or even contempt of natural goods for the sake of the supernatural, was the culmination of an intensely personal commitment reached through a process of Ignatian Exercises, the method of spiritual discernment she learned from Hugo's retreat. Maritain for his part distinguishes individual ethics from political ethics: "individual ethics takes into account the subordinate ultimate end, but directly aims at the absolute ultimate one, whereas political ethics takes into account the absolute ultimate end, but its direct aim is the subordinate ultimate end, the good of the rational nature in its temporal achievement."⁴¹ Conscience, therefore, serves as the ultimate adjudicator of ethical decisions for both Maritain and Day. Whether one should sacrifice his/her life in a just war situation is ultimately a personal spiritual decision, a prudential

³⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 66.

⁴¹ Maritain, *Man and the State*, p. 62.

judgment weighing the balance between the dignity and demands of one's spiritual nature and the worth of the temporal common good.

In the next section I will return to the specific issue of means and summarize the thoughts of Maritain and Day from a long view of their historical trajectories. Does Day's ascetical embrace of the supernatural life suggest a qualitative departure from her previous ideas on the purification of means and a dissent from Maritain? I will answer in the negative.

4. Pure Means and Supernatural Means Recaptured

Read within the historical contexts of Maritain and Day, these two terms—pure means and supernatural means—do not betray a substantial rift. They do differ in scope and emphasis, each reflective of a particular theological commitment, which in the final analysis has something to do with a different understanding of the relationship between nature and grace. In this section I aim to recapture the nuanced meaning of these two terms as they have functioned in the long careers of Maritain and Day. I hope to show that there is a greater compatibility between them than difference.

Pure means, or the purification of means as Maritain explicated in the 1930s, pointed emphatically to the organic means of edification, or poor temporal means directed to temporal affairs but infused by the Christian spirit. These could take varied forms concretely in a multitude of social roles and networks, subject to the inspiration of the individual Christian. These ideas remained the same in *Man and the State*, what some call the culmination of Maritain's political philosophy. Here he upholds democracy as the only form of government capable of a truly "moral rationalization of politics" because of its adherence to "a rational organization of freedoms founded upon law."⁴² He then outlines the available means members of a democratic society could utilize in efficaciously regulating the State: voting, freedom of expression through media, "pressure groups and other non-institutional ways through which some particular fragments in the body politic act upon government agencies," and political agitation in critical moments or what he calls "flesh-and-bone means of political warfare."⁴³ One may easily include Day's pacifist protests in this list. Maritain concludes by reiterating the importance of organic edification: it is critical for the body politic to engage in "indirect but efficacious means" of

⁴² Maritain, *Man and the State*, p. 59.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 68. It is not entirely clear what the last item in the list means. It is probably not inaccurate to connect the "flesh-and-bone" means with the organizing antics of Saul Alinsky, whom Maritain names as one of the few greatest revolutionaries in the world, and whom he quotes in this very passage.

controlling the direction of the State by their cumulative activities of “spontaneous growth” and by forming powerful social currents which the State cannot ignore.⁴⁴

The *Satyagraha* of Gandhi was given in *Freedom* as a type of organic edification. Maritain holds it up again in *Man and the State* as an exceptional means particularly appropriate to three situations: in the struggle to gain a nation’s freedom from bondage, in the struggle of a people to gain control over a State, and “in the struggle of Christians to transform civilization by making it actually Christian, actually inspired by the Gospel.”⁴⁵ This evaluation of *Satyagraha* seems congruent with Day’s understanding of her pacifist cause. Interestingly, Robert Ludlow of the CW, whom Mel Piehl considers the “forerunner of a possibly historic shift in the whole Catholic Church’s attitude toward war,” hailed *Satyagraha* as a paradigmatic Christian way of social renewal rooted in a spiritual vision of life.⁴⁶ Such a representation would be a readaptation of Ghandi’s *Satyagraha* in a Christian context, something Maritain explicitly called for in *Freedom*.⁴⁷ Its commendation by both Maritain and the CW illustrates the fundamental unity of their thoughts.

In Maritain’s critique of problematic approaches to means, he singles out two polar positions, one of which was the position of someone who regards politics as utterly compromised and sees no other way forward except through “evangelical activities of self-purification, self-sacrifice, and fraternal love.”⁴⁸ This statement may seem critical of Day’s supernatural approach, but Maritain goes on to say: “I do not deny that such a position is justifiable, at least with regard to the possibilities or the highest calling of certain individuals.” His point is that even in the direst circumstance such as in a concentration camp, some political action could still be done. Maritain does not dispute merits of the supernatural means but insists that for society as a whole more could always be done.

With regard to the use of aggressive force a distinction should be made between two subject groups. If referring to the Christian social activist, both Maritain and Day would place the use of force at the very bottom of options, and in Day’s case, perhaps absolutely forbidden. Her reservations about the draft card burning demonstrations of the Berri-gans would suggest so.⁴⁹ Yet even in this situation, her attitude was identical to what Maritain laid out in *Freedom*, for her concern was that in the heat of passionate agitation actions might get out of control

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 70.

⁴⁶ Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, p. 206.

⁴⁷ Maritain, ‘Freedom in the Modern World,’ p. 88.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 72. The other position, categorically bad, would be the Machiavellian stance that “the end justifies the means and no God exists.”

⁴⁹ Miller, *A Harsh and Dreadful Love*, p. 443.

and cause injury. The purification of means according to Maritain was directed to exactly this type of situation. Further, Maritain writes that even when all spiritual means have failed and no other option lies ahead but a recourse to aggressive force, one should still enter more deeply into the spirit so that “sufficient strength” and “fresh solutions” may yet be discovered.⁵⁰ Day herself could have said the same. If, however, the subject group referred to is the modern State, the difference between Day and Maritain is more serious. Yet even here one wonders whether Day’s absolute pacifism was not partially due to her concerns about the United States as a country. As Miller points out, during the Cold War in 1953, though the CW was critical of the warmongering activities from both the US and Russia, its criticism was mostly directed to the US.⁵¹ Day’s positive mentions of Lenin and Mao-Tse-Tung in her autobiography and the CW newspaper raise the same question.⁵² In a 1951 CW article Day comments that She and Maurin sometimes shocked people by quoting Marx, Lenin, and Mao-Tse-Tung, and the reason for doing so was this: “perhaps these people are nearer to us because we know Communists personally, because we bought our house from Koreans, because we lived in Chinatown, because we have a Japanese from Nagasaki staying in the house, because we are in a Jewish neighborhood now, because we have negro fellow workers in the house.”⁵³ Another reason was that when compared to other countries, the United States seemed to lack the most essential human element: joy, which, Day affirmed, could come only by way of the cross. Though not necessarily softening her stance to the use of violence by other State powers, Day does convey here a romanticized sense of other cultures due to her concrete relationships with some of their less privileged groups. She also connects her pacifism with a judgment of America’s spiritual circumstance. Americans, due to their prosperity and lack of joy, are especially in need of the ascetical life of supernatural virtues, which alone could heal and vitalize. Could it be that Day’s American identity contributed to her pacifism much the same way Maritain’s French identity influenced his just-war stance? An affirmative answer would considerably shorten the theological distance between the two.

In summary of this section, I have argued for the overall compatibility between Maritain’s pure means and the supernatural means

⁵⁰ Maritain, ‘Freedom in the Modern World,’ p. 87.

⁵¹ One should acknowledge, however, that Day’s criticism of the US took place in the rhetorical context of the Cold War, McCarthyism, and a constant barrage of arguments against the USSR.

⁵² Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness* (NY: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc, 1952), pp. 97, 170. Dorothy Day, ‘The Incompatibility of Love and Violence,’ *The Catholic Worker* XVII (May 1951), no. 11, p. 2. Dorothy Day, ‘On Pilgrimage: First Visit to Soviet Russia,’ *The Catholic Worker* XXXVII (Sept 1971), no. 7, p. 1. Dorothy Day, ‘Russia, II On Pilgrimage,’ *The Catholic Worker* XXXVII (Oct 1971), no. 8, p. 3.

⁵³ Day, ‘The Incompatibility of Love and Violence,’ p. 2.

Day embraced in her absolute pacifism. Their conviction about the importance of means has a slightly different center of gravity. Maritain entrusts the judgment to the practical virtues of prudence and justice while Day follows the simple but difficult manifesto of the Sermon on the Mount. Yet when taking into consideration the historical continuity of their thoughts as well as their nuanced attitude toward specific situations, their compatibility is not overshadowed by their difference.

Conclusion

Despite their differences on anarchism and pacifism arising from the events of WWII, Maritain and Day enjoyed a remarkable, mutually supportive friendship with each other. The solidarity between the two may be best depicted by a passage from Maritain's *The Person and the Common Good*, in which he praises two types of ultimate sacrifice worthy of the name Christian. They respectively exhibit a communal and a personalist character. The first type is when a person gives his/her life for the terrestrial common good. In this sacrifice the person "wills what is good and acts in accordance with justice" while simultaneously loving his/her own soul in accordance with charity.⁵⁴ The second type of sacrifice seems a fitting description of Day and her CW movement:

When, against social pressures, the human person upholds right, justice, fraternal charity, when it raises itself above social life to enter into the solitary life of the spirit, when it deserts the banquets of common life, to feed upon the transcendentals, when, seeming to forget the city, it fastens to the adamantine objectivity of beauty and truth, when it pays obeisance to God rather than to men, in these very acts it still serves the common good of the city and in an eminent fashion.⁵⁵

On a fundamental level Maritain and Day must have understood and appreciated each other's vocation and insights. It is difficult to know the full extent and depth of their mutual admiration for each other, but it is safe to say that the spiritual bond between Maritain and Day goes much deeper than a charitable friendship with a patient acknowledgement of a profound disagreement, as attested by the fact that quotations from Maritain are found in the CW newspaper as filler vignettes from the forties all the way into the nineties.⁵⁶ Day probably would not have

⁵⁴ Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, pp. 64–5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64. I interpret the phrases in this paragraph, "solitary life of the spirit" and "seeming to forget the city" in a metaphorical sense rather than literal, since the CW movement obviously did not consist of recluses living a purely contemplative lifestyle away from the city.

⁵⁶ *The Catholic Worker* XIV, no. 7 (Oct 1947), p. 7; XIV, no. 10 (Jan 1948), p. 1; XXVI, no. 1 (Aug 1959), p. 3; XXXIII, no. 5 (Feb 1967), p. 4; XL, no. 8 (Oct 1974), p. 6; LXII, no. 7 (Dec 1995), p. 2.

printed someone as fillers if she did not enjoy a fundamental theological and spiritual unity with him. To observe the camaraderie between the two despite what appears to be an irreconcilable difference in theology is to have hope that Christians may enjoy an essential unity on even the most difficult matters. What first drew Maritain and Day together in the 1930s was their shared recognition that only sanctity could renew the world. That understanding never changed for either of them. In the end it had to be their personal sanctity which enabled them to bring perceptive nuances to the complex issues they were faced with.

I will conclude with one more bit of nuance, and this will have to do with Day. A surprising fact about Day, discovered by a startled Jim Forest, was that she had a little statue of Joan of Arc next to her bed wearing armor. Joan of Arc was not, said Day, canonized for being a soldier but for having followed her conscience. Forest's own interpretation is worth quoting here: "The more I think about it, the more I think Dorothy admired [Joan's] armor as much as her conscience. She thought all of us should be willing to risk our lives, put our lives on the line, fight for what we think is right. . . . And she wasn't embarrassed to admire a warrior saint."⁵⁷ This comment on Day's character is essentially identical to Maritain's description above of the sacrificial person, both the one dying physically for the common good and the one living the supernatural renunciation. What animated both Maritain and Day was this heroic commitment to giving everything for the object of one's faith. The pure means of the philosopher and the supernatural means of the saint are united in the Christian who is willing to be the "fighting shape" and "the unbribed soul" living and dying for that which they love.⁵⁸

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⁵⁷ Rosalie Riegle Troester, ed., *Voices from the Catholic Worker* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), p. 80.

⁵⁸ Day, *The Long Loneliness*, p. 119, quoting William James.