



May 21, 2023

## Easter—The Ascension of the Lord

*"...Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them.... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"*

*Matthew 28:19-20*



Dear Friends,

Peter Maurin was one of 23 children born into a peasant family in southern France in 1877. He was taught by the Christian Brothers where he soaked up Catholic Social Teaching. He immigrated to the United States in 1909. For twenty years he wandered about North America working all kinds of manual labor jobs. The whole time he was thinking about how to bring together meaningfully all Catholic social philosophy.

Maurin believed that the problems in society came from cutting ourselves off from the values of the Gospel. He believed if each person lived gospel values the future will be different because we made the present different. In other words, we need to live the change that we envision.

Peter found it difficult to translate his ideas into large scale actions, until he met Dorothy Day in 1932. Dorothy was a convert to Catholicism who was seeking a way to combine her religious faith with a commitment to change society. In the peasant Frenchman she found her answer. Together they founded the Catholic Worker—a Newspaper and movement that combined hospitality and the works of mercy with the radical social message of the Gospel. Their goal was to try and create the *"kind of society where it would be easier to be good."*

Peter lived to see his ideas put into action in the Catholic Worker Houses that were established in many cities throughout the continent. (There is a Catholic Worker House in Oakland.) He died at seventy-two in 1949.

Jesus gave his disciples and us a mission. Our mission is to change the world to reflect the kindness, compassion, mercy, and justice of the Kingdom. We received this call in our baptism in which we were immersed in the saving dying and rising of our Lord. At our baptism we are anointed in the Holy Spirit just as Jesus was at his baptism.

After the water-bath of baptism we are anointed with Chrism (a mixture of olive and perfumed natural oils). The aromatic oil is placed on our head. And the minister prays *"just as Christ Jesus was anointed priest, prophet, and king may you always live as a member of his body."* What does this mean?

The role of priest in the Old Testament was to offer sacrifices to God. We now offer our lives united to Christ's sacrifice as a sacrifice of thanks and praise to God. The role of the prophet was to speak the truth of God's justice to those in power. And the role of the king was to maintain the unity of the people. This is our job description.

The word 'Christ' is not a name but a title that translates as 'anointed one.' We are anointed in the Spirit of the risen Jesus and so we can be called other 'Christs' or 'Christians.' Like Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day need to discern where God is calling us to make the world a better place where it is easier for everyone to do good. That is the challenge of our Baptism. Peter Maurin said, *"The world would be better off / if people tried to be better. / And people would become better / if they stopped trying to become better off."*

Christ is risen!

*Fr Ron*

*Esta carta está en español en el sitio web: [www.anne.church](http://www.anne.church)*