

Public Abstract

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Title:We Go Back: Antimodernism in the Early Catholic Worker Movement

The Catholic Worker Movement, founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933, is generally thought of as a peace and social justice movement. While the Workers have concerned themselves with these issues since the founding of movement in 1933, the early Workers also strongly criticized the modern age. Maurin provided much of the basis for their criticism by way of his notion of history, which exalted the medieval and condemned the modern. By examining the Workers until approximately the 1950s, I demonstrate that key aspects of the movement—namely, charity, poverty, and views on community—were influenced by their views on modernity. Acknowledging these views offers a means to a deeper understanding and an alternate perspective of the history of the movement, as well as an opportunity to reassess the Catholic Workers' place in American religious history.