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**For Immediate Release**

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**Chicago Parish Announces the First Conference Dedicated to Peter Maurin, Co-Founder of the Catholic Worker Movement**

Chicago, Ill. – The first academic conference dedicated to the life, thought and influence of Peter Maurin, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, will take place in September in Chicago at Mary, Mother of God Parish. The Peter Maurin Conference is the collaboration between Mary, Mother of God Parish, in the Edgewater neighborhood of Chicago, the Hank Center for The Catholic Intellectual Heritage at Loyola University Chicago, and DePaul University’s Department of Catholic Studies.

The American journalist Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, a French agitator and author, founded *The Catholic Worker* newspaper in 1933. Their ideas caught fire with Catholic laity and secular workers in the middle of the Great Depression. Since the paper’s first printing, more than 200 communities—farms, households, and houses of hospitality—have begun to put Day and Maurin’s ideas of hospitality, the works of mercy, and an economic culture based on the Mystical Body of Christ into action in the world. Servant of God Dorothy Day is on her way to canonization. And, in her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, Day described Maurin’s spirit and ideas as altering the course of her life.

“You can safely say without Peter Maurin there would be no Catholic Worker movement,” said James Murphy. Murphy, director of [Canterbury House](#), a house of hospitality inspired by the Catholic Worker tradition that is part of Mary Mother of God Parish, began planning for a conference dedicated to Peter Maurin five years ago with Matthieu Langlois, a PhD student in history at Fordham University. “Peter’s program of cult, culture, and cultivation is just as relevant to the Church and world today as it was 90 years ago,” said Murphy, “His program points the way toward a radical renewal of the Church, meaning, as Peter meant it, to get back to its roots.”

The organizers said the purpose of holding an academic conference at a parish was to connect Maurin’s approach to the life of a church community. “It is fitting that this conference is held at a parish, where people from the Catholic Worker movement, the academy, and the church can reflect together on Maurin’s vision,” said Mark Franzen, director of [St. Gregory’s Hall](#), a cultural center at Mary, Mother of God Parish. “How do we find inspiration in the Church’s social doctrine to radically transform ourselves, our institutions, and society as a whole? That is what Maurin wanted us to ask.” Maurin proposed parishes and houses of hospitality become places where the rich and poor could encounter one another and where scholars could “collaborate with the workers in the making of a path from things as they are to things as they should be.”

In this spirit, roundtable discussions—a Catholic Worker tradition to promote “clarification of thought”—will replace the traditional paper presentations and panels. Lincoln Rice, author of *The Forgotten Radical Peter Maurin*, an annotated volume of Maurin’s essays, will provide a keynote address on the system of ideas found in Maurin’s first published “Easy Essays.” “Many know Maurin for his quirky sayings,” Rice said. “But Maurin has a coherent system of thought that would benefit Catholic Workers to understand in order to guide their work, and for anyone concerned about industrialization, impersonalization and wealth inequality.”

The conference will be held at the St. Gregory the Great campus of Mary, Mother of God Parish September 6-8, 2024. Workers or scholars interested in submitting a roundtable discussion proposal should see the conference website. Registration for the conference, submissions for roundtable proposals, and more details can be found at the Gregory Hall website:

[www.stgregoryhall.org/maurin](http://www.stgregoryhall.org/maurin).

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