

On Pilgrimage - Oct/Nov 1980

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: Short diary-like jottings: memories, visitors, TV shows watched, and comments on books. (DDLW #921).

Diary Notes

Sun., 9/1—Mass on television is wonderful for shut-ins.

Mon., 9/8—Press day for the September issue of **The Catholic Worker**. When Peggy, Frank, Marj and Jennifer dropped by St. Joseph's Church in the Village for the 8:00 a.m. Mass on their way to the printer, they met Father Bob Hovda, one of the few priests who agreed with our conscientious objector position years ago. He is now at St. Joseph's Church.

The paper looks very good—they did a good job.

The morning glories are up to the third floor of Maryhouse. I can see them grow each day! Mike Harank put up strong string, like fish line, to hold them.

Tues., 9/9—A TV program on insect control—DDT—one chemical after another—recalls Rachel Carson's book, **Silent Spring**. It would have interested Dr. Marion Moses. She is going to Rome next month for a three-day environmental conference, and then to another conference in California.

Thurs., 9/11—Dorothy Gauchat called from Our Lady of the Wayside, Avon, Ohio. They have received a large gift, \$250,000 to build a new house, Guadalupe House, for adult, handicapped people. We printed her appeal letter about this project in the July/August issues of **The Catholic Worker**.

We made pilgrimages when we lived on Mott Street—one to the Mother Cabrini shrine way up on the West Side, East Side, sponsored by the Italians. We started at midnight from Mott Street and got to 115th Street at 6:00 a.m. Many of the Italian women walked barefoot or in stocking feet. I do not remember the name of the saint. Those were the days when we had to fast from midnight until after Communion. No stopping for a cup of coffee along the way!

Sun., 9/14—There was a profession of vows at St. Francis Church (OFM) near Penn Station, and left-over sandwiches from the celebration were given to us.

Wed., 9/24—Tina de Aragon telephoned, then Father Dan Berrigan, then Eileen Egan.

Mary Durnin, home after several years in England, is here from Milwaukee. She and Deane Mowrer went out to breakfast this morning. I'm sorry I didn't feel well enough to visit with Mary.

Marie McCall sent a lovely card. Every year, she calls Arthur J. Lacey to come over and get the scarves and caps she has knit during the year for Christmas.

Ade Bethune's mother used to knit socks (I think she and her friends did it), enough for everyone in our soup line each Christmas. What welcome gifts!

Sat., 9/27—I used to fill my prayer books (my Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary and a 30-day prayer to those I prayed for, “of all who bothered me” someone in our family said. Once, Jane O'Donnell erased all the names.

Sun., 9/28—My brother John visited and brought me some of his wife Tessa's maple nut fudge.

A TV program exploring the galaxies made me think of the astronauts who walked on the moon, and my getting a recognition from the Pope with one of them. We were chosen to receive Communion from Pope Paul VI in St. Peter's in Rome.

A dramatization of Dostoevski's **Crime and Punishment** begins on television tonight.

Mon., 9/29—Watched the spy, mystery story, **Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy** on TV.

There is much on television on nuclear missiles. How many launching pads in the country—to launch guided missiles!

Thurs., 10/2—I am reading **Dream on the Golden Mountain** by Malcolm Cowley (Viking Press). My dear niece, Susan Spier Myake, sent me a copy of it after her mother's death, and, reading it now, I find it a most interesting history of the depression years, those “parlous times” as the saying goes. A far better book than **Exiles Return**, an earlier book.

The Dream of the Golden Mountain and Mike Gold's book, **Jews Without Money** are very stimulating. Eugene O'Neill also – his plays **The Iceman Cometh** and **Mourning Becomes Electra** were on TV this past year. In a TV interview, movie director John Huston said he had asked to film Gene O'Neill's first play, **No Exit**, but Warner Brothers Studio would not permit it.

But I did not find the East Side like that in Mike Gold's book when I worked for the **New York Call** and lived there on \$5.00 a week in a heatless apartment. I still have a beautiful Russian postal card from Mike Gold when he was visiting Russia and we were at the old Chrystie Steet house.

Fri., 10/3—John and Tessa's anniversary.

We have a talk on ancient China for our meeting tonight. I remember a Friday night meeting years ago—it was at Chrystie Street, our beautiful, old house—and my effrontery in talking about Mao when he first came into power, after I had read only a long item in **Timemagazine**. Chinese from all over New York City came to hear me!

Sun., 10/5—A **Civilization** program on TV—Cathedrals, etc., reminded me of Peter Maurin's phrases: “The thirteenth, the greatest of all centuries,” “Cult, Culture and Cultivation,” “When the Irish Were Irish.” Peter was a great teacher

and knew much about history. Father Geoffrey Gneuhs, O.P., has written a book about Peter Maurin. I wish we had a publisher—or the money to publish it ourselves.

Nina Polcyn Moore called from Sauk Centre, Minn., and we recalled a girl who came to us years ago in 1933 or 1934 at Charles Street. Her name is Evangeline Mercier and she entered the Carmelites.

I walked a little in the hall today, getting my “sealegs” under me—a family saying. My mother’s forebears in Marlboro and Poughkeepsie, N.Y. were whalers.

Wed., 10/8—Took a little tour around Maryhouse. It is much bigger than I remembered it when Frank and Ruth Collins and I first went over it in 1973.

Sat., 10/11—Joan Thomas (Ammon Hennacy’s widow) was here this morning. She left for Rhode Island and Cape Cod at noon, then back to Phoenix, Arizona. She still has some of Ammon’s books for sale, **The Book of Ammon** and **One Man Revolution**. And this afternoon, Jim Wilson, who burned his draft card in the 1960’s and served a prison sentence (together with Tom Cornell and others) stopped by. I didn’t feel well enough to visit with either of them.

Re-reading Dorothy Sayers’ Peter Wimsey stories. When I was 12 years old and broke my arm in a fall, my Aunt Jenny sent me Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes to read.

Sat., 10/8—A huge, golden nugget, as big as a human head, has been found in Australia. There will be a “gold rush” there for sure. I must re-read the Arthur Upfield **Boney** books, very good mysteries, the best since Sherlock Holmes.

Father Lyle Young, who often says Mass for us, is going to Australia, his home territory, next week for a three-month visit. He has kept me supplied with **New Yorker** magazines, as he finishes them.

Sun., 10/26—My sister Della used to quote, “Had I foreseen what was to befall me, I would have rued the day.” I do miss traveling as I used to—to all our houses, by bus. You feel you are really seeing the country, as you speed along the highway, over plain and mountain.

Tues., 10/28—My sister-in-law Tessa’s sister, Tina de Aragon, is in St. Rose’s Home. She will still be close to us all there, where so many of our Catholic Workers—at least eight—are employed, part or full time. It is a home for cancer patients, started by Nathaniel Hawthorne’s daughter Rose in her own apartment, when she took in a neighbor who was dying. Like so many small projects, it grew miraculously (there are now homes in several other cities), and it seems to be a place where people are cared for and helped to die with dignity and love. I was reading Rose Hawthorne’s book about their beginnings, **Sorrow Built a Bridge**, when I met Peter Maurin. And now Tina is there. We continually are reminded of Tina at every Mass we have in Maryhouse, because the beautiful statue of the Madonna, which she carved for us out of **lignum vitae**, faces us from behind the altar.