

On Pilgrimage - April 1964

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Summary: Chronicles trips to Chicago, Montreal, and Vermont where she visited friends and family, and attended meetings where she often spoke. (DDLW #814).

The event of the month on my travels was visiting Karl and Jean Meyer in Chicago. Karl had his first pass from the t.b. hospital and from now on he will be able to come home on 24 hour leave once a week. He hopes to be out in a few months. One doctor even said at the end of April. We certainly must admire Jean, who stayed at St. Stephen's house of hospitality and kept it going during Karl's absence in the hospital. And bore their first child too—the valiant woman! Of course she has the help of LaMont who has been with the work since the beginning.

March first I had a visit with my daughter and the grandchildren and was able this year to be with her on her birthday. It has been a mild winter which is a godsend when it comes to heating bills, and driving, though their car has been acting up, burning too much oil, with a leak in the radiator and various other troubles to numerous to mention. With the old car she had to put some of the children in the trunk to get to Mass and catechism and CYO and school games and library and so on, but of course they were not all going at once, so that really did not have to happen too often. Now with an old station wagon, 1955, it is trouble, trouble. One can get a fourteen room house in the county for \$6,000 but it is cheap because it is so far from work and school that it necessitates a car.

From Vermont, I proceeded to Montreal where I was to speak at McGill Newman club, and met Fr. Breen who was in charge and whose sermons made me hope for a retreat from him this coming summer. The Mass was offered at an altar facing the people and was most fully participated in by the students. On one occasion, Fr. Michaelides preached, another good sermon. Students flock to his courses which include studies of Sartre and Camus, Jack Birmingham, head of the Browser's bookshop, who will tell in our next issue of things happening in Montreal and his plans for cooperative ownership of the shop, took me around Montreal and was most helpful in getting me to meetings. There was an interesting press conference in the home of Therese Casgrain who heads the **Voice of Women** and is most active in politics in Canada. She was one of the women of the **Mothers of Peace** pilgrimage to Rome last year. Sunday

afternoon we had a very good meeting in both French and English in the basement of the Lebanese Church. During my visit in Montreal I was the guest of Karl and Liselotte Stern, and on Sunday evening we had music! Wednesday evening is their usual meeting for a gathering of friends to make music but I had missed it, arriving around eleven that night. Karl had just finished a new book, and Weibe has been*****happily busy not only with some of her grandchildren, but also with her shop where she repairs Shakespeare folios and rare books. It was good to meet again many old friends in Montreal, Dixie MacMaster and her mother, Madeleine Sheridan, Pat Ling, Dr. Magnus Seng and wife. Monday I awoke to a snow covered scene (it had been completely clear during the rest of my visit) and I got to the bus station early and set out in the midst of a steady snow fall.

By the time I reached Burlington, however, the snow had not arrived and the ground was all clear. I stayed with Bob Spencer and his wife, and spoke at Winooski Park, St. Michael's College, where Becky, my oldest grandchild, had worked as a waitress during the summer course three years ago. She is now a freshman at*****the*****University of Vermont and I had the joy of seeing her in the Newman club at the university and at the students union where I spoke the next afternoon. By that time the snow had caught up with us and we were ploughing through a foot of it. The Spencers took us to their home in Jericho after the meeting, and a trip which usually takes less than an hour took three hours that night. Cars were stalled on the hills, and jeeps were employed by the city to push the cars up the hills to clear the traffic. It was a novel experience. Becky had to get off to school the next morning and I to the bus station where I set out again for the day-long trip to New York. I often think how much pleasanter these bus trips are through the beautiful New England countryside, than the stage coach trips so vividly described by Dickens!

For the next week I was home in New York. We have three apartments for girls in a tenement near the office, and now that Clare Bee is with us it has the semblance of a house of hospitality for women once again. Not having anyone really in charge who can firmly send late visitors home, and set a limit as to how many visiting college girls can sleep in our limited space made chaos for a time.

My next engagement was in Chicago, an afternoon meeting at Mundelein college, and a meeting the next night of the Monsignor John A. Ryan Forum at McCormack Place, on the lake front. The snow which began for me in Montreal, and followed me to Burlington now caught up with me in Chicago and it was so bad we could not use a car but had to go to the Loop by the elevated from Evanston, where I was staying with Nina Polcyn who always makes my visits so comfortable. But friends picked us up at her shop and we were able to proceed through the then cleared streets out to the south side and the great hall. I am always in a state of great dread at these big meetings, and feel that the delectable dinner which usually precedes such a meeting is quite wasted on me, quaking as I am. But Monsignor Cantwell, an old and dear friend, was reassuringly at my side and the conversation was good, especially since Fr. Duggan, another old

friend from Tracy, California—one of the bracero priests, was there, and telling us about his visit to Brazil and other South American countries. No use trying to list all who were there, and all the old friends at the meeting itself. For a large meeting—they estimated a thousand were present—it went off most comfortably, and I had the feeling that a great many old readers of the **Catholic Worker** were there, people who had been engaged in helping us distribute the paper in the early days, and their children besides! The question period lasted a long time indeed, and as the questions were written out on cards and sent up to the dais, I was able to bring a great number of them home to study at my leisure. Mr. Hilliard, head of the Welfare services of all Cook County, was the chairman of the meeting and I was happy to hear that he was also the head of the Catholic Interracial Council and gave much personal attention in all the work in which he was engaged.

I think the atmosphere of the meeting was an unusual one, for so large an audience to be so intimate, and to have so much exchange of thought over so many controversial subjects, including the relations of clergy and laity.

I was able to visit Mary Widman and her helpers, Margaret and Elizabeth and Paul and Marita and to have a delightful visit too with Fr. Chrysostom Tarasevich and his nephew Fr. Vladimir. The liturgy at Holy Redeemer Church is unutterably beautiful, in English, and sung by all the congregation, and always afterward coffee and rolls and good talk.

Sunday afternoon I took the train back to New York to spend Holy Week in the midst of the Catholic Worker family.

Next issue is our May Day issue, our 31st anniversary? I am never quite sure, but our first number came out May first, 1933. May God grant us many more May Days, feast of St. Joseph, carpenter, our patron, the patron of the universal Church, and our most dear householder. May he watch over us again this coming year.