On Pilgrimage,
September ==========

By Dorothy Day

1948, pp. 130 - 142.

Summary: Calls picketing and demonstrating works of mercy–"rebuking the sinner, enlightening the ignorant, counseling the doubtful." Reflects on the challenge of over-mechanization and urges changing over to more "living criteria" for life. Contrasts the noise of New York with the quiet of the farm, a good atmosphere for prayer and reading–"refreshment, light, and peace." (DDLW #483).

**

September 1

TO GO on picket lines to protest discrimination in housing, to protest the draft, is one of the works of mercy, which include "rebuking the sinner, enlightening the ignorant, counseling the doubtful." But I confess I always do these things with fear and trembling. I loathe the use of force, and I remember how Peter used to react to violence. On one occasion when two men fought in the office over on Charles Street, he threatened to leave the work forever if it ever happened again. In a collection by Federov, . . . *Russian Spirituality,*there is the story of St. Sergius, who left his monastery for two years rather than impose his authority by force. On another occasion years ago at the Easton farm, one man knocked down another over a dispute about an egg (it is horrible to think of people fighting physically over food), and for the rest of the summer Peter ate neither eggs nor milk in order that others might have more. That was his idea of justice.

On a picket line there is always the threat of violence. A picket line may be called the use of force, compelling others to hear your point of view through the medium of the poster and the placard, but I prefer to list it as a work of mercy.

Picket lines are too often associated with violence, and it is true that as in Boston, an opposing party may suddenly spring in among you, wrest the signs from your hands, and by the use of force, induce others to use force. The very effort to hold on to signs, to resist being choked to death when the sign hangs around your neck, gives the appearance of participation in violence, and the police enter in then and contribute their share. From a peaceful, orderly demonstration I have seen a picket line become in one second a rioting mob. There is always the feel of it in the air, the threat of it. There is always the passerby who contributes his share – "Why don't you get in there and rough 'em up!" – to the crowd gathered on the other side of the street watching for trouble. And of course we were all accused of being Communists and socialists.

But the picket line went on, and the papers were distributed for three hours, through the hot noonday, and there was no trouble, nor has there been since in New York. In Boston and Philadelphia there has been evidence of the mob

spirit on picket lines, but only at a few meetings in New York was there threat of trouble.

The picketing will continue every week until all the registration is complete.

At the farm we had just finished a retreat, and there was much work of cleaning up after one and getting ready for the Labor Day retreat for families. We have a permanent summer staff of a score or more, and expect an influx of another fifty over the weekend, so we are using a neighboring farm to help house the older boys.

During the spring we planned only one retreat a month for the next six months, and then, as things worked out, other groups found their way in, and one cannot refuse the emergency calls made on us. In this way there were a number of extra retreats and weekends this summer which we had not counted on at all. There were a dozen young Puerto Ricans, for instance, who came up with Joe Gil one weekend, and they brought goatskins, which they stretched over drums and made into tom-toms. And they caught snakes and skinned them and cured the skins and made bracelets. There were three conferences a day and hearty eating and swimming, and two seminarians and a priest had their hands full answering questions.

And then there are what Hans Tunnesen calls "proyects," and they certainly are coming on apace what with extra help like George Collins from Pittsburgh, Ed Gibson from the Catholic University, Joe Sweeney, Bob Campbell, and others. The root cellar was dug over two summers, right through rock and shale, and during this last month they cemented up the side walls and cut down oaks in the woods which John Filliger snaked in with the tractor and worked into place. (He is getting to love that tractor as he does his horses.) It is such a foundation as the Empire State building might rest on, we all say, and though we will cover it over with tons of rock and dirt this year, it stands there, a completed foundation for a future house. The potatoes are coming in, and turnips and beets and enormous carrots, and string beans and salads and tomatoes, and now the cannery is underway, and Dave Mason and Joe Carter are busy in that from morning till night.

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September 10
Stottler's Crossroads

AFTER A MONTH of drought, rain has come, and I arrived at Dave's and Tamar's between heavy thundershowers that settled down to an all-night and all-day downpour. It is too late to do the garden any good. It is all burned up now, and there is nothing left to can. The early crops were good, however. The best milk goat died in the middle of the heat wave, and now there is only one giving a couple of quarts of milk, and three kids. Tamar nurses the baby, drinks a quart of the goat's milk herself, and the other two children and David have the remaining quart and additional canned or powdered milk. One of our visitors

at the Catholic Worker this summer was a woman who has run a dairy farm for years. She says that the time is coming soon when everyone will be using powdered milk, the costs of shipping fresh milk have become so high.

Expenses are not great down here. The farm, which cost twelve hundred dollars, is all paid for. There is no gas, no electric, no water bill. Taxes are very low and spaced out over the year, the poll tax coming in April, personal property tax in October, real estate tax (three dollars) some other month. They don't know what the buildings are taxed for yet. No money goes out for ice. The children and Tamar go barefoot all summer. She makes all their clothes. The one expense is food, and they certainly eat very simply. The lunch today was fishcakes made from a fifteen-cent can of sardines mixed with whole-wheat breadcrumbs, homegrown tomatoes and beans, boiled barley, and applesauce for dessert. For supper, Spanish rice, using the leftover beans and tomatoes.

David is working in the tomato cannery a mile down the road, and his wage is sixty cents an hour. The women make more on piecework, some of them getting ten dollars a day. They started today at eight, and Dave did not get home until six, but he worked only five hours, as the machinery was always breaking down.

Mrs. Fearnow, our sixty-seven-year-old neighbor, works every day, standing on her feet at the job, and her grandson Willard too. A married woman with a two-year-old boy was there, and while she was working he was tied in a stroller all the day. The canning season is at its height now and will last until frost. Last year frost came October first. People who work in the canneries sell their tomatoes there, too, so they take some days off to pick them. The cannery owner also has a store, and he would like always to do business by barter, his customers bringing him their cash crop and eggs and he giving them gasoline and dry goods, hardware and staples. He does not have much in the way of foodstuffs, only what people can't raise. People make sort of a holiday out of the cannery season – a change of work, a getting away from the farm for a while, visiting with others.

The Fearnows are picking tomatoes Monday, and Dave will help them. There is much working together, the boys helping on our place to get the hay in, and each helping the other with the wood.

Roy, the fourteen-year-old grandson, has had to go back to school, but he can work after school and do the chores besides. Becky has a great admiration for him and imitates his way of speech and his deepening voice. Already at three, she has a West Virginia accent.

It is so wonderful to have these weeklong visits every few months, to see how the children are growing and learning. Six weeks ago when I was here, they were having such a good time out of doors that they didn't want cuddling, but this time, what with the rain, they were only too anxious to sit on my lap and rock and be read to and sung to. We had "All ye works of the Lord," of course, and included the fifty new chickens, the young goats, all the neighbors they have become better acquainted with, as well as all the relations. We said our morning

prayers, a Hail Mary and a Morning Offering, and they were very good about grace at meals.

Toward late afternoon the weather cleared, and we got a few lines of wash out and a few more tubs-full put to soak. Tamar got some weaving done – she is making rag rugs to sell – and baked a cake, besides driving to and from the cannery twice for practice in driving. She has no license yet.

It is a full day, with animals to feed and re-tether, and three babies and a seven-room house to look after. Nothing ever gets done thoroughly, but that's the way things have to be with children. A mother has to keep her mind on a number of things at once, on the cake in the oven, on Becky, Susie, and Eric, planning and replanning what she wants to do and what she has to do, and what she *can*do. There is not much time wasted.

Now it is eight-thirty, and Tamar is reading *Kristin Lavransdatter,*and David, *Blackfriar's,*and I am adding these few pages to my notebook.

So many pages are given over to ideas, theorizings, figuring things out, setting things down, for my own benefit as well as my readers', that it is good to write about just facts – the account of a day.

And I must say I feel good, physically and mentally refreshed, to have had this day with babies after weeks of seeing and talking to people in the office, in the house of hospitality, at the retreat house; writing, answering letters, going to meetings. It is living, not just talking about it.

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Sunday
Feast of the Holy Name of Mary

A BEAUTIFUL DAY, and we all went to the nine o'clock Mass. The children were very good through a twenty-minute wait before Mass while Father Kealy heard confessions, then during a long, leisurely Mass which included the reading of the epistle and gospel, a letter from the bishop urging the parishioners to support the home missions, a sermon explaining the gospel, and all the announcements about a garden party, a chicken supper, and the coal needs of the church for the coming winter. They were good though restless, and of course we were conscious of them and fearful of what they would do next all through the Mass, as were all the other parents. It was a happy morning. By the time we got back, having traveled twenty-four miles to and from Mass, it was time to prepare the traditional Sunday dinner, which meant killing two roosters, plucking them, cleaning them, and having them in the pan an hour after the work started. That with carrots, onions, tomatoes right out of the garden, whole-wheat bread, and peaches and goats' milk made a wonderful meal, and no worrying about the grocery bill.

The children had their naps while we read the paper, which we get once a week after Sunday Mass. There was a review of Gandhi's *Autobiography*by Vincent

Sheehan, and he said in it, rebuking Toynbee, that Gandhi's great love for his brothers in their poverty led him to turn to the spinning wheel; that it was not an attack on industrialism but a move to clothe his people who had not been clothed by industrial capitalism.

As I write, Tamar's spinning wheel is in one corner of this guest bedroom, and there is a bag of wool up at Maryfarm, Newburgh. We washed and cleaned it of weeds and seeds this summer, and it is all ready to be carded and spun and knit into socks and sweaters. (Right now there are the rag rugs on the loom, and Tamar still has spun wool for dyeing and weaving.) We will send the wool down here after we have carded it for spinning there.

When the children woke up, we went down to the brook for a swim. There is a most wonderful scent in the air these days, a mixture of pine and an odor of flowers I cannot identify, like the smell of mignonette or heliotrope. Goldenrod has a distinct fragrance which one only notices when you get the plant in the house. People have such a prejudice against it on account of hay fever that they are wary of smelling it. The brook was full and cold in the deeper parts. We had a good swim, and Becky and Susie paddled happily around, collecting stones.

Coming back across the sunny meadow, which is no longer harsh stubble but as soft as it looks to walk upon, we could not resist the temptation to lie out there in the cropped field under the sky. The hay from that field was in the barn; the goats stood out snowy white against the green. The children wandered away to play with them and left us there to bask in the sunlight. It is almost the time of the equinoctial storms, and we are thanking God for this weather while we have it.

Right after supper Peter Yost drove by with a truckload of equipment from Leslie's farm. He bought him out last week for twenty-one hundred dollars, and Leslie, the near neighbor, now intends to go back to school on the GI bill.

Yost's trade slogan is that he buys anything from a baby chick to a grain of corn. He has great sales every month down on the Martinsburg road, and Tamar and I went to one on a cold, drizzly day last winter. As he passed us this afternoon, he wanted to know if Dave could use a team of horses – he could have them for fifty dollars, harness included. Those same horses had cost Leslie one hundred and fifty last November when the Michaels had their sales.

Mr. Yost will fence in the place, he says, and after he has harvested the corn, he will fatten stock on the farm, sell the lumber on it, and rent the house for five dollars a month.

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Tuesday, September 14

YESTERDAY WE canned sixteen quarts of peaches and today twenty quarts of tomatoes. In the afternoon we went down to the brook and bathed. Today we saw three large turtles swimming underwater and any number of striped fish

about eight inches long. While we sat on a gravelly bank collecting pieces of stone with the imprint of shells and leaves on them, of which the brook bed is full, Susie caught sight of a slim little garter snake the color of a twig, coiled out on a branch sunning himself. No matter how close the pebbles we threw came to him, he would not move. Now we will be adding more verses to our "all ye works of the Lord" song.

No work at the cannery these last two days, but tomato-picking and corn-cutting [are] going on all over the neighborhood, and both Fearnows and Smiths asked for David's help. There is no dearth of work of such kind right now. Smith works all the way over in Hagerstown at the airplane factory for ten dollars a day and counts on his sons to help with the farm. But the young men in the neighborhood, his sons among them, who missed the last war are enlisting, and the young ones are having a good time outside school hours.

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Feast of the Sorrows of BVM,
September 15

HOW ONE does work in the country! Washing, making chili sauce, feeding the children, baking. And today we had to go to town so Tamar could take a test for her driver's license. That is why I am here, to be with her. We had to have the lights and the horn fixed, and that took two hours. And then she didn't pass her test. There was a substitute state trooper because one of our two district troopers had a sick wife in the hospital (she had just had twins and they died) and the other was moving. Our substitute friend said Tamar seemed to lack confidence and that she should practice more. So her test is held up another three weeks until the first Wednesday of next month. (She will drive to Mass anyway.)

On the way home we stopped at the cannery, where David [had been] working since eight o'clock. Our neighbors Mrs. Fearnow and Willard, her grandson, were there too, so we drove them home at five-thirty. There were twenty-eight girls peeling tomatoes, a number of men unloading them off a truck and scalding them, three women filling the cans, scooping them up from a deep wooden trough and putting them on a conveyor belt which delivered them to a machine which capped them and sent them into another trough to David, who stacked them in a huge basket which later is lifted by a crane and deposited in one of three tanks of water, where it bubbles away under water for thirty-five minutes. Willard, general handyman, had the job of unloading and restacking the cans ready to be labeled and shipped. They are all the same tomatoes, but all kinds of labels are affixed to the cans, according to which stores sell them.

The women are of all ages working in these little canneries which dot the countryside hereabouts. There are teenage girls and grandmothers, and some young mothers bring their young children. I saw the two-year-old again in his stroller, at five. He had been there most of the day, aside from a nap morning and afternoon outside in a car. He was yawning and crying alternately at the

end of his long day. There is an hour for lunch and ten minutes off morning and afternoon, and also an occasional cessation from work when some part of the machine breaks down. They are pretty ramshackle affairs, these canneries, in old barn-like structures, open to the weather, sloppy underfoot. But everybody seems to be glad of the chance at this irregular and neighborly work. Again there will be no work till Friday because the nights are too cold to ripen the tomatoes properly. Green tomatoes cause the cans to burst.

Tomorrow Dave will go to cut corn for the Smiths. One of his young lads came by at suppertime on a skittish horse, and Becky and Susie stood in stunned admiration watching him. What a paradise this is for children. This same boy with his brothers and a neighbor's boy had been sneaking out of what chores they could to play cowboys and Indians up and down the creek all afternoon after school. And Susie and Becky are happy and singing the long day through.

A letter came from Walter from the steel mills at Sparrows' Point today. He is working there for the time being (many of his relatives are in the mills), but he has his name in for a truck and wants to go into the trucking business.

Today we got a paper, and on the front page the headline was "Scientists Warn that the Population Outgrows Food." The occasion was the centenary meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

"Scientists took stock today of what science had wrought in the past hundred years and visioned a dark outlook for the human race in the next century. They linked this outlook to overpopulation and the dwindling of natural resources, both of which are the direct consequences of progress of science and technology."

The conclusion seemed to be the usual upside-down one of limitation of population rather than limitation of all the unnecessary things so that basic needs could be cared for. Dr. Edmund Sennett of Yale, [a member] of the Association, said, "Man, not nature, is the great problem today. These vast new powers in the hands of selfish or arrogant men simply increase their power to dominate their fellows. If modern technology enables greedy exploiters to destroy our patrimony or natural resources, we would be better off to go back to the horse and buggy age. . . . Man wants to be much more than a well-kept beast," he said. And then, astoundingly enough, he added, "Unless we give him ample opportunity and encouragement to cultivate the higher side of his nature fully and can *free him from the restraints of dogma and compulsion,*he will never be satisfied, and there will be no real hope for him."

Lewis Mumford was an interesting speaker. "The whole process of mechanization may be defeated unless we engage every part of the human personality. Otherwise we may bring about a revolt against the machine like that Samuel Butler jokingly predicted in *Erewhon.*To overcome the present crisis both in techniques and in Western civilization, there must be a changeover from mechanical to living criteria. We must concentrate on the repressed and dwarfed elements in the personality and the community. . . . Not the power, not the profit man, nor the

mechanical man, but the *whole man* [Eric Gill would say"holy" man] must be the central actor in the new civilization."

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Saturday, September 19
St. Januarius

IN NEW YORK these last few days, around the corner from us on Mulberry Street, there is a fiesta, a feast, celebrated every year with bands and processions [and] feastings around open charcoal fires, where sausages are roasted on spits, huge pots of grease in which pieces of dough wrapped around pot cheese are French fried, corn is boiled.

There have been several other feasts this summer – Our Lady of Grace, Our Lady's Assumption, St. Rocco – and now there is this last feast of the summer. The noise is tremendous, and people drag out benches and chairs and tables and live on the sidewalks night and day.

There we are in the most congested section of the largest city of the world, if you speak of greater New York. Half a block down the street is the wide stream of traffic on Canal Street, which separates Little Italy from Chinatown. Two blocks east is the Bowery – with its elevated railroad, which makes din enough, though the clanging streetcars have been replaced by buses, and the truck traffic dies down at night. Noise of traffic, noise of radios, jukeboxes, of humans.

And down here in West Virginia, only a few hours out of the capitol, Washington, D.C., and one mile from Stottler's Crossroads, there is silence.

That is, comparative silence. Crickets outside make the night alive, and Susie upstairs has kept up a conversation and a singing with herself for an hour and a half. She is tireless. (Right now a plane flies overhead.)

Becky, who is three, goes to bed quietly, insists upon having her covers arranged tidily, composes herself quietly, turns her face to the wall, and that is all from her for the night. Susie, just two, on the other hand, acts as though wound up. Constant motion, constant noise. She wanders in and out of bed, makes a wreck of her covers, drags everything out of bureau drawers, dresses and undresses herself, until finally in the midst of reading or conversation downstairs, we realize that there is *silence.*The great silence has then descended on the house. Susie has run down.

Eric, seven months, presents no problems as yet. He is suckled, he sleeps. He awakes, eats applesauce or cereal, plays, laughs, practices crawling, and again is suckled and sleeps. A bright, responsive, adorable baby with a close cap of curling golden brown hair, deep blue slanting eyes, and a curly mouth, always smiling.

This last week there have been Ember Days, but there is no problem feeding the man of the house here. He likes simple meals: bread and cheese, a bowl of soup, a cup of tea for one meal; spaghetti or Spanish rice for the other. There have

been tomatoes, cucumbers, string beans, applesauce. Always we seem to be low on food, but there is always something in the pantry or garden. And Tamar has put up a great deal in jars for the winter.

Most certainly we miss [daily] Mass and Communion, being twelve miles from Mass. But how much the more do we look forward to Sunday. Even the children, tiny as they are, started getting ready today, getting out their shoes, dresses, scarves, little pocketbooks that Marge sent for an Easter present. The pocketbooks represent something to carry their offering in.

Certainly when one cannot get to Mass in the morning, one feels the need much more to stop at times during the day to pray. Thank God for Father Frey's little prayerbook of the Psalms, beautifully printed and arranged as the breviary is, so that one can pray "seven times" during the day.

Today the *Commonweal*came with a chapter from Thomas Merton's book in it about his entrance into the Trappist monastery at Gethsemane, Kentucky. He mentions the need we have in our religious life for a formal observance of prayer, the need for ritual.

And I remember reading in Father Faber's *At the Foot of the Cross* how our Blessed Mother in Egypt, a pagan land, must have surrounded herself with articles and customs which reminded her of her country and her people and their faith.

David has a crucifix in every room, even on the porch, and it brings me a great sense of comfort when I see it, black against the whitewashed porch.

There is a wonderful calendar compiled by the Maussolff and von Trapp families and published by the Society of St. Paul, 2187 Victory Blvd., Staten Island, N.Y., which has short biographies of the saints of the day, which is perfect to read aloud every morning.

The children love their morning prayers, and even when I am rocking them and singing "All ye works of the Lord," they fold their tiny hands reverently.

When the Church is not near at hand, one is forced to see that there is religion in the home.

We are all sitting around the Aladdin lamp, which gives just as good a light as electricity, and Tamar is reading a geological survey of Morgan County, and David is reading a book on rural sociology, describing the dismal condition of the farmer.

Tamar gets very impatient sometimes at the lack of such facilities as running water, but there is the possibility later of getting a well drilled outside the back door, thanks to the generosity of relatives. Until then, she must leave it to David to cart pails of water from the spring five hundred feet away. Sometimes they arrive with little fish swimming in them. Today during a thundershower, while the children danced in the downpour, we filled pails and tubs and a hogshead with water, which will simplify the washing problem Monday.

Tomorrow I must leave, after this brief week's visit, and it is so beautiful, so peaceful here, far from noise and traffic and the world.

There are good books here to be read and studied – Gill and Belloc and Chesterton, sociologists, historians, and philosophers. There are the Scriptures to be studied. There is God's beautiful world, the world He loved around us, with its simple people, hard-working people, poor people. Life is beautiful here, and I hate to go.

But it is only a day away from New York, and we will visit again soon.

It is so good to have such beginnings as this to come to, for "refreshment, light, and peace."

As Gill says in one of his letters to Graham Carey, "I am sure that all attempts to create cells of the good life in the form of small communities are not only much to be encouraged but are the only hope. . . . It is to me perfectly clear that communities of layfolk religiously cutting themselves off from the money economy are an absolute necessity if Christianity is not to go down, either into the dust or the catacombs. . . . There are lots of little attempts going on in England today in spite of everything. But of course they are pretty hard up against it, and they get jolly little encouragement from the ordinary population, and still less from the Catholic."

There are lots of little attempts in the United States too, but in all I have visited, there is still a hankering for the "fleshpots," and strangely enough, pots are in this case modern plumbing. The men as much as the women insist on having it, and it is ridiculous to think that so many are deterred from achieving freedom because of this.

Father Gindler, who is a parish priest in the coal regions and an editor of the *Sunday Visitor,*once said to me, "Do you have to always mention outhouses?"

I feel like the Meagles family in *Little Dorrit,*who are always talking about how *practical*they are. A place with an outhouse costs between twelve hundred and twenty-five hundred dollars. A place with plumbing begins at eight thousand dollars. What a difference to pay!

It is late, ten o'clock, and time for sleep. Tamar has been reading *Kristin Lavransdatter*this last hour, and David is closing all the downstairs windows to keep out the morning damp. The house is heavenly quiet. When I write again in my notebook, it will be from Harrisburg, where I will stop off for a few days on my way back to New York.

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