

On Pilgrimage - June 1952

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: Travels to a Trappist monastery for Holy Week and notes her speaking engagements. Recommends a journal on Christian art and lauds all personal efforts at creative expression. (DDLW #634).

Suddenly Tom Sullivan decides that a June issue must come out before June, and announces that all copy must be in by May 21. So on a cold (50 degrees) windy, rainy night, I sit down to the typewriter. There are never more than two battered up old machines in the office and it is a pain to write on them. Our poverty also consists in having poor tools to work with. "Put in an appeal for a couple of decent typewriters," someone says. "We'll never have the money to buy even a rebuilt machine." "Put in an appeal for sheets, pillow cases, towels," someone else says. "Men are sleeping on old spreads, patched together table cloths or just plain mattress." That's the way it goes. Always something more urgent than a typewriter.

Travel

"Curved roads and narrow bridges." That phrase kept running through my mind last month on an all night ride on a bus. "It was one of those warning signs that suddenly strike you with their poetry and could be used as the title of a travelogue. My life this past six weeks has been something of a series of jaunts and yet with it all there has been a sense of leisure. You can't go too fast on curved roads and narrow bridges. When one travels there are long solitary hours on a bus, times when you can't read, don't talk, and really get in some praying.

Conyers, Ga.

The end of Holy Week, I spent at the Trappist Monastery, Our Lady of the Holy Ghost, about twenty-five miles out of Atlanta, and it was really spring there. There is a guest house down the road from the monastery, situated beside a pond where the frogs croaked every evening, as we sat on the long porch. I was with Sarah Fahy who started the colored clinic in Atlanta which she turned over to the Sisters of the Medical Missions after it was well under way. On Holy Saturday her sister Peter Claver joined us and we assisted at the Holy Sacrifice midnight Saturday and remained through Matins Sunday morning until after three o'clock. It was unutterably beautiful, so beautiful that it cannot be written about. Jack English, now Frater Charles, has been there since last September, and it was good to see him and to have the permission of Abbot Robert to talk to him. He was filled with enthusiasm for a book on St. Aelred

which he was reading and for the life he was living. "You are always conscious of being held up by others," he said. "You are never alone, never idle, never have quite enough food or quite enough sleep."

Fr. Abbott is indeed a father and is loved by all who meet him. Brother Hugh waited on us at the table, and when we expressed at eating when we knew the monks were on bread and water good Friday, he said brusquely, "That's my business. Besides, everybody's doing it."

I went around smiling to myself at such summing up. It is the business of Christians to fast and pray; and when everybody does it, it is much easier.

There are eighty-five monks and brothers at Holy ghost Abbey and not only is the atmosphere one of profound peace, but of simple and generous hospitality to all around. One feels that there the monks are close to the soil, to the people around them, and there are always men from Atlanta coming to the retreat house for days of refreshment. When there are women guests, as there were the four days I was there, it was to see relatives who were in the monastery.

Marycrest

One Tuesday night I spoke at Marycrest, Orangeburg, N.Y., the family project of which the Willocks are the inspiration. We had supper beforehand and Ed spoke of the awful drive for work there was in him. He recalled the shame of the youth of his era who had no work in the depression, who left home rather than be seen around the house. He confessed to an inability to relax, to rest, to stop thinking, and ill as he is, this is serious. I hope the friends of the Catholic Worker will continue to pray hard for him and send gifts to help out during this trying period of illness. Remember, there are eight children and another coming. We are all brothers, and must help one another. Money is always the most urgent need of course, food prices being what they are. Ione Hendricks is generously helping Dorothy Willock thank God. Ed means much to us all.

There were talks too at Freedom House and Haverford College and Brandeis College in Boston and at General Theological Seminary in New York. At the invitation of Archbishop Cushing I spoke at the Harvard Catholic Club on May first, and at the yearly meeting of the Pius XI bookshop. It was a joy to see Carly and Mary Paulson there. In New London I spoke at the Catholic circulating library and at Providence at Sacred Heart church for St. Catherine's library. I visited my old friend Fr. McKenna, the Marist for whom I had worked as cook at our Lady of the Elms on Staten Island many years ago and I also visited Mother Chiarini at Providence, who used to take care of Tamar at St. Patrick's Academy at Richmond, Staten Island.

Peter's Anniversary

May 15, the feast of St. John Baptist de LeSalle, founder of the Christian Brothers, is the day Peter Maurin died, and on that day Masses were sung at both Maryfarm and Peter Maurin Farm and the day was celebrated as a feast day. On Friday night I spoke on Peter at Chrystie street, and Saturday morning at nine there was a Mass offered for him at our parish church of the Nativity, on Second avenue. On Sunday afternoon, at the Peter Maurin farm there was a bus load of friends from Grace Church, Jersey City, and I spoke again about Peter, and personal responsibility and the apostolate. It was a good week of celebrating Peter's anniversary.

One of the most pleasing exchanges that comes into **The Catholic Worker** office is **The Catholic Art Quarterly** of which Ade Bethune was formerly the editor and is now one of the guiding hands. Last month a most delightful supplement came in, *The Catholic Elementary Art Guide*, vol. V, 1952-1953 which is published to fill this objective—the right making of things needed for Christian purposes. Such as a crucifix, rosary, holy water font, nativity figures, candle holders, wall hangings, etc. Each issue is devoted to a specific problem, making illustrations, weaving, lettering, clay modeling, paper mache projects, printing processes, embroidery, etc. It includes step by step procedures, the philosophical aspects of each technique described, brief discussions of timely and seasonal Christian practices, etc.

This guide is not only for teachers in schools, but for mothers in homes. Send one dollar check or money order for the art guide, or four dollars a year for a subscription to the *Catholic Art Quarterly*, to Ann Grill, 6332 N. Magnolia Avenue, Chicago 4, Ill. The folder describing the art guide says to send your dollar to your local representatives, but lack of space forbids us printing the representatives, and we trust Miss Grill will be able to handle the others. Or perhaps the shop, *Designs for Christian Living*, Box 5948, Kansas City 2, Mo., might be a better thing since they handle all the books listed also in the *Art Guide*.

These are guides for all parents and teachers, not just for the artist. Every man is an artist, every child, Ade always points out, and I remember her sympathetic appreciation of some paintings on the walls of the Chicago Catholic Worker years ago. One of the men from the breadline decided he would decorate our walls for us and the result was colorful but crude and rather too much a copy of what has scornfully been termed Barclay Street. When Ade showed up her sympathetic encouragement warmed all hearts. She and Peter Maurin always had so great a respect for the creative aspirations of others, that they warmly applauded all attempts at singing, playing, dancing, painting, writing—any cultural effort to do the thing one's self, instead of only listening to music made by others, admiring art done by others. They were firm believers in participating in life, not just being onlookers. Who knows what talents lie crushed and buried by just the not seeing Christ in others!

In a craft shop we had for a time on Mott street there was some beautiful wood carving done by men who had never made a crucifix or statue before.

And at one of the retreats we had for families at Maryfarm, Newburgh, Julia Porcelli taught the children of the couples who came, how to make little pictures of Our Lady, little pictures of the Cross, so that in effect they were making something of a retreat themselves.

We call attention again to the revised list of retreats for the summer at Maryfarm, Newburgh; July 3-6, Fourth of July weekend; July 27-August 1—Father Paul Judge; August 17-23, Fr. Marion Casey. In September there will be another five day retreat under Fr. Robert Brown, the date to be announced later. These are all basic retreats dealing with nature and the supernatural.

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