

On Pilgrimage - September 1979

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: A set of short entries from her diary, including descriptions of anti-nuclear demonstrations and the subsequent arrests of participants, the death of several friends, politics on Cuba, and a book on Catholic Worker conscientious objectors in World War II. Mentions many friends and books. (DDLW #600).

Notes in my diary

7/26 Joe Zarrella visited this morning and gave me a snapshot of his daughters and their spouses and children—a lovely color picture. Joe and Gerry Griffin were close friends at Mott Street. Gerry wept when Joe left the *Catholic Worker*, married and moved to Tell City, Indiana. Gerry himself married and is teaching at New York University. He drove an ambulance in the American Field Service in North Africa in the Second World War. He used to end his letters to us “Mashed potatoes and Gravy,” repeated hungrily five times, he was so homesick.

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7/27 Tom Sullivan, who also served in the Pacific field of action in World War II, called to tell me of a new book of stories of converts, all of whom mentioned the *Catholic Worker* as being an influence. He said he would send me a copy. It was reading **Sorrow Built a Bridge**, the story of Rose Hawthorne, that influenced me. Now, many of our young volunteers are working at the cancer hospital she founded. She also was a convert.

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7/29 Father Danny O’Shea, who runs the Rochester, New York *Catholic Worker* house, visited and offered Sunday Mass for us in the auditorium at Maryhouse, where we hold our Friday night meetings.****

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8/1 Deane Mowrer, Jeannette Noel and Gary Donatelli had their day in court for the Shoreham, Long Island anti-nuclear demonstration on June 3rd. All pleaded guilty and were released unconditionally. After the trial, they picnicked at Jones Beach before returning home.

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8/4 Brother Victor Avila and Margaret Mudd have given me a huge volume of E. B. White’s **Letters**. A New Englander, he wrote regularly for the **New Yorker** magazine. I enjoy his writing of life on land and shore in Maine. It is like **Pepys’ Diary**. A most welcome gift!

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8/5 We had an early Sunday Mass at Maryhouse this morning. Then, two cars full of Catholic Workers headed off to the anti-nuclear demonstration at the Con Edison plant up the Hudson River at Indian Point, with Deane Mowrer very much a valiant leader. Pat and Kathleen Jordan and their children also went to the demonstration. Others are writing about it for this issue.

Jeannette Noel didn't join this demonstration. She is visiting the Trappists in Spencer, Massachusetts. The Trappists (Massachusetts, Georgia, Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Utah, and New York, etc.) have always been our friends, from our beginnings in the Thirties.

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8/6 News of Jane O'Donnell's death. She worked long with us. We called her "commando." I can see her yet, coming to my room and telling me I was a bad example, reading late at night.

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8/12 Seeing a review of a book on Thomas Mann in the **New York Sunday Times** book review section, I recall that Peter Maurin brought me Thomas Mann's **The Magic Mountain** to read and it gave me a nightmare. Somebody in Union Square had given it to him and said Peter reminded him of a character in it.

Our 11:30 a.m. Sunday Mass was said by Father Geoffrey Gneuchs, white-robed in his Dominican habit. Father Geoff has written a book about Peter Maurin. I hope some publisher will print it. He is a worker and scholar whom Peter Maurin would have dearly loved.

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8/14 Kathleen DeSutter Jordan visited with me this afternoon in our backyard garden, which is blooming. Pat brought their children in from Staten Island later on, and they all went to the free New York Philharmonic concert in Central Park this evening.

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8/16 Went to noonday Mass at our parish church. Several from the Catholic Worker are still in the Westchester County Jail in Valhalla, New York, since the Indian Point demonstration on August 5th. Ironic, to have a jail in a place called Valhalla!

8/19 Eileen Egan and Gordon Zahn are going to an international conference for peace in Warsaw, Poland. Looking over my old diaries, which include my travels with Eileen and also with Nina Polcyn Moore of Minnesota, I overcame my envy. I have visited Australia, Singapore, Tanzania, India, Italy, France, England, Poland and Russia.

I have just finished reading Gordon Zahn's latest book (on Catholic conscientious objectors—the Stoddard and other Catholic camps), **Another Part of the War—The Camp Simon Story** (Univ. of Mass. Press).

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8/21 Went to evening Mass at Nativity Church. Mary Lathrop Pope came over for supper afterwards. Steve Kaune brought me a copy of **The Third Man** by Graham Greene.

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8/25 Tragedy – a death. Charles Killian was faithful for years in mailing out the paper. He came to Mass always.

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8/27 My sister's sister-in-law, Doris Harmon, came by to bring us some clothes and to visit. She is 89 years old, amazingly vigorous.

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8/29 One of our first helpers on Fifteenth Street in 1933, Larry Doyle called St. Joseph House and spoke with Jane Sammon. Larry also helped Ade Bethune at her Newport, Rhode Island place. I hope he still has his soft, Irish accent.

Stanley Vishnewski and I have been watching a television series, **Against the Wind**, the tragic story of the Irish forced into emigration from Ireland to Australia years ago. Violence continues in Ireland. Now, news in the papers of the assassination of Lord Mountbattan.

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9/1 A furor in Maryhouse this morning. The kitchen door broke and Janet was locked out of the kitchen—women howling for coffee and breakfast!

Radio news of 3000 Soviet troops in Cuba. The Secretary of State is warning Cuba about these troops. The President may seek an extra four billion for the military!

Nearly 11 a.m. and no Frank yet with the **Times**, to satisfy my curiosity on Cuba! My own articles on Cuba in **On Pilgrimage—The Sixties** are interesting to me now.

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9/6 Lee LeCuyer left for St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland. Frank, Jane and Kassie went with him in the van. Peter Maurin thought of St. John's as one of the best colleges in the country.

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9/10 Dan Mauk and Bob Ellsberg left for Europe. Our managing editors are gadabouts, and that includes Peggy Scherer, who lived in Guatemala for six months, and Jane Sammon and Marj Humphrey who were in Mexico and El Salvador earlier this year. All three speak Spanish now. They follow Peter Maurin's idea that scholars should be workers and workers, scholars.