

Notes By The Way - July August 1945

Dorothy Day

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*Summary: Diary-like short accounts of liturgical celebrations, retreats, and doings at Maryfarm and Mott Street, including the visit of two F.B.I. men seeking the whereabouts of a draft evader. Mentions reading Raissa Maritain's *Adventures in Grace* and a visit to cloistered Maryknoll sisters which is inspiring. Thoughts on imprisonment and modesty. Anticipates her pilgrimage to the Shrine of Mother Cabrini. (DDLW #413).*

Maryfarm, Easton, Pa.

June 28, Vigil of SS. Peter and Paul. Up at 5:30, first Mass at 6:00, Prime at 6:30, sung Mass at 7:00. At breakfast we read the epistles and Gospels from the feast of St. Irenaeus and also of the vigil. Also Rodriguez on Silence.

Today we mailed the sheep's wool to Mr. Bartlett, Harmony, Maine, to be washed, carded and spun to knit socks and sweaters for the winter. One sheep and two lambs have wandered off into the woods and the boys were out looking for them these last few days.

Last night at supper we had reading at the table about the Cure of Ars. He sounded rather extreme with his condemnation of dancing and singing and his endeavors to gain back his parishioners. But I began to think of the rural slums that we see around us in Easton, Phillipsburg and Glendon, and I can see well how he had to fight drunkenness and disorder and the kind of dancing and singing that go with it.

Our retreatants are engaged in all sorts of tasks, gardening, cleaning the barn, mending the road, baking, sewing, cleaning, etc. Today Mr. Eichlin brought us three loads of hay under a lowering sky, our neighbors the Haskows helping, and Stanley and David unloading into our beautiful old barn.

All the families on the farm have goats and rabbits and chickens. Tamar and Dave loaned Grace Branham their goat for the summer, and she is giving three quarts of milk a day. She "came in" on April 3, the day Tamar's baby was born, and since the cow was dry at that time, the three quarts of goat's milk certainly came in handy. Now Grace has the goat, and she sends down the surplus that she cannot use to Fr. Roy and Peter.

Went to see Helen Montague. Her six children have measles right now and during the winter it was whooping cough. The oldest is seven. What vigils young mothers must keep, and what fastings! Some of the retreatants are staying over for a week and they are going to help out in the household for a few days.

Coming in on the Lehigh train as I write these notes, first there are hills, then fields, a patchwork of them, haying, wheat ripening. Then little towns and suburbs of bigger towns with little homes with grape arbors and goats and chickens and people working and sitting outside under the trees.

Then the hell and disorder of the industrial plants, and the countryside laid waste. How can it be that industrialists are not ashamed of this ghastly disorder?

I forgot to mention that this morning, the last day of the retreat, a white dove flew in the chapel! Symbol of peace and love, it made us very happy.

June 29th

Today, two FBI men came in to see Fr. Duffy about a draft evader. He knew Father and had talked to him on a number of occasions. With the stand he is taking, this is the last place that he would hang out, with us fighting conscription as we are, issuing articles on its immorality, etc. These two men, a Mr. Walsh and a Mr. Seccor, used first a bullying tone, then an emotional appeal, and then threats, trying to make Father Duffy promise that he would let them know if he came across the young man they were looking for. We have had many a man from the FBI come in to interview us but none so stupid in their behavior as these two.

This evening Boris, a Russian boy from the East side who has been dropping in since the seaman's strike in 1936, came in. At the beginning of the war, he made us his insurance beneficiary, and so he has come unscathed through many a trip, bringing home ribboned cards announcing he was under fire in the Atlantic, Pacific, Mediterranean and all the seven seas, wherever they may be.

July 4

Reading Raissa Maritain's "Adventures in Grace" and was much interested in her account of Pere Clerrisac's spiritual direction. He had a great admiration for primitive Christianity and the works of the early Fathers. Jacques and Raissa were reading St. John of the Cross at the time and were intensely desirous of sanctity, and conscious of the need for effort to attain it. Pere Clerrisac emphasized God's grace rather than personal effort. A point which I well understand. It interests me much to see this struggle of two points of view which goes on still, and I do not see why there should be any opposition between emphasizing the need for effort toward personal sanctification and at the same time the calm faith that God can do all things. "Love God and do as you will." I love the Maritains for their love for St. John of the Cross.

The chapters of Raissa's book relating to her parents' conversion were most beautiful. How I would have enjoyed knowing them, visiting them there in Paris.

We are introduced, too, to Peguy, Roualt, Bloy. I am still reading the book, so this is anything but an adequate review.

Today I visited the cloistered sisters at Maryknoll, had the refreshment of hearing a conference which Fr. Damasus was giving the sisters. I had a most enjoyable visit with him later and he is going to bring his Catholic Action group for a retreat on the farm, which will be a great joy to us all. Fr. Damasus emphasized waiting, praying, praising the Lord rather than planning, rebuilding, making world plans. He told the story of Paula, Paulina and Pontifex Maximus, and the advice of St. Jerome on how to deal with the noisy child and the cranky old Pontifex Maximus. "Teach the child," he told Paula, "to climb on the knees of the cranky old man, and sing softly in his ears the Holy Saturday Alleluias, and that will probably do more to convert him than all brilliant arguments." I shall remember that when we sing to the Lord on the farm.

Out of Jail

One of our hardest working fellow workers is just out of the Tombs where he has been taking a rest for the past five days. He says it is an airless place, all closed in with only slight openings at the very top of the gigantic windows. It was so unbearably close that the men all went around in trousers only. But the guards wore their uniforms. One man died and two went insane on his tier of 65 men. He does not know how many persons the Tombs contain. They were locked in their cells only part of the day, during the rest they roamed the corridors. For meals there were kidney beans, spaghetti, stew, mostly potatoes, "nothing any good, but then, what do you expect in jail?"

Dress

Waiting in a coffee shop out of the rain, for a bus. There was a young woman waiting there also and from her conversation I discover she is a driver, waiting to go on duty. She wears toeless back suede pumps with very high heels, rayon stockings, a black rayon dress, tight and short with a very low cut neck, with a heavy costume jewelry pin which drags it down still lower. It made me consider not only the lack of modesty of modern dress but the need for functional dress. This young woman was evidently strong, vigorous, and self-respecting. Her life was not an easy one. She worked long hours, piloting a heavy bus through congested streets. She was not a harlot. She lived, not by her body, but by hard labor. But she dressed like a harlot. Probably because she could not afford to buy work clothes. It is indeed too bad that our styles, our concept of painted beauty has come to us from Hollywood and from loose women.

July 5

After a visit such as yesterday's to Maryknoll, I feel free of care, loosed of all burdens. What a holy and a happy life! *None* was recited at 3:00 in English; vespers sung at 5:00 in Latin; supper, then Fr. Damasus' conference; then recreation when we all had a talk together; then compline.

Mass the next morning was at 6:45 and I caught the 7:45 train. The river was beautiful, so calm and hazy one could not see the opposite shore. Bouncing Betsy and sweet clover made the air sweet.

Easton Again

July 21

It is 9:00 in the evening and still light enough to sit outside and write. An almost full moon is coming up over the hill. I am sitting on Tamar's front step, between the forsythia bush and the mulberry tree, watching the kittens. The mother cat is chasing crickets. It is clear up here but over the town there is a pall of smoke from all the factories. An airplane flies overhead, a night bird cries out, the ewe under the cherry trees, now returned, bleats for her two adventurous lambs. The other sheep, which Fr. Magee gave Tamar and David for a wedding present, runs around loose with the little kid of the Angora goat. Every now and then they come up on the porch of the little cabin I occupy on the farm and stampede around. The other night I was saying my prayers, and the big round sheep with the long solemn face and the tiny little kid stood at the door looking in at me with great interest. We owe a great debt of gratitude to that sheep. We have 16 skeins of wool, which cost only \$1.80 to spin. With the three additional sheep we will be able to weave quite a bit of cloth. We have not as yet found a loom and are looking for a small one which can be moved around from room to room on the farm.

Weather

During the month there was a regular twister here in Easton and Phillipsburg. One house was washed down a cliff and six people killed. Our own wheat crop was ruined and the corn, cabbage and tomatoes were spoiled for miles around. The farmers have suffered a great loss. The storm lasted for four hours. Six inches of rain fell and terrible hail for a noisy half hour broke the windows in the greenhouses near the town. The lightning struck many small trees on our place but through it all the children on the farm slept and the animals—cow, heifer, calf, sheep, goats and pigs, bowed their heads meekly out there in the fields and “weathered” the storm. They are an example to us.

Mott Street Again

Up at 6:00 and down to St. Andrew's for 7 o'clock Mass which Msgr. Nelson says. He hears confessions after this Mass every morning. Then a leisurely walk through Columbus Square and Mulberry Park where cats and fellow workers from our breadline sleep side by side these hot days and nights. Then a pause to talk to Katie on the corner about some assistance we need to give to some of our poorer neighbors.

Katie has just been on pilgrimage, an annual event with her and her sister and daughter and other relatives who make up a group from Mott street. Another group go from Mulberry street.

Every year on the eve of the feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, pilgrims gather from the Italian parishes in all five boroughs and walk to the church on First avenue and 115th St. Katie and her sister go in socks, two or three pair, but the younger women go barefoot. They start out from Hester street, which is our corner, at 10:00 at night, and walk over to First avenue and then straight up to 115th St. They arrive at their destination at 1:00 in the morning in time for the first Mass of the feast and there is a beautiful sermon and all receive communion and then make their way home again by car or bus for breakfast and a few hours of sleep. Katie was on the job at 6:00 the next morning and working all day selling vegetables and she never felt tired at all, she said.

"It was so beautiful, walking up along the river, and the air was so fresh and cool," she said. "We stopped to look at the water and at the boats and we enjoyed ourselves. We do this every year—it is a promise we all make to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Next year, you go with us, if we are alive," she added.

Pilgrimage

Because we have long been planning a pilgrimage, and because we missed this one, we will make a pilgrimage on the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary, September 15, to the Shrine of Mother Cabrini, walking from the Catholic Worker headquarters to the shrine at 701 Washington Ave. (around 185th St.), where the body of this American saint, Italian born, rests today. If we leave at ten in the evening, Katie, the experienced pilgrim assures us, we will arrive in time for the first Mass the next morning. This is walking at pilgrim's pace, of course. We chose this time of the year, since it is easier to walk lightly clad than it is in the winter, impeded by many garments.

We will make the pilgrimage to beg our Blessed Mother to intercede for us to bring about peace.