

On Pilgrimage - September 1978

Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, September 1978, 7.

Summary: Jottings of catholic workers coming and going, books she's reading, and television shows.. Praises the work and writing of young CWers. (DDLW #591).

Since I only travel between Maryhouse and Staten Island, perhaps, instead of "On Pilgrimage," this column should be called "On the Beach"—or "On the Shelf?"

Staten Island

Very cool today. Doris Nielsen is visiting her family in the Pocono mountains. Unless she gets back tonight, I won't get to Mass tomorrow.

Much activity, building and refilling the bank at the end of the lane, repairing the damage done by the storms and tides of this past winter and spring.

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Doris got back, so we went to Mass as usual—at the Church in Pleasant Plains, near her home.

Bill Griffin dropped in on his way home from work, and he and my daughter, Tamar, who is visiting from Vermont, walked on the beach. Both Tamar and I are making use of the Jordans' library and bath (Pat and Kathleen and their two children live across the road). I am still reading the works of George Orwell. Frank Sheed's wife, Maisie Ward, said she had found them so moving, so exciting, that she wept when she finished them, in joyful gratitude and sorrow that there were no more of them to read.

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It is good sitting out on the red bench in front of the bungalow, overlooking the water. Lovely sounds of birds in the trees, especially at nightfall.

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Frank came out with the July-August issue of **The Catholic Worker**. The young people are heroic workers, also good writers. It is an exciting issue. Bob Ellsberg's story is moving and impressive—the arrest and imprisonment for picketing at Rocky Flats, Colorado, for blocking the tracks to prevent train movement of nuclear missile parts.

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Tom and Monica Cornell and family came to visit—a very hot day—the two children enjoyed the beach. Tom is National Program Director for the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Eileen Egan sent out home-made bread and creamed honey from Holy Trinity Abbey, Huntsville, Utah. She had been attending a meeting of co-workers of Mother Teresa of India nearby—and the Abbot of Holy Trinity had remembered my visit there. The monks sent promises of prayers. Since our beginnings in the Thirties, Trappists have been close to us, and we depend on their prayers.

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A quiet day—pouring rain and high winds—not a fishing boat on the bay—not a soul stirring on the beach or in the neighborhood. Only Bill Griffin came by, with **The New York Times**.

Saw “A Man for All Seasons,” the story of Thomas More, on television tonight. A great and moving story.

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Breakfast conversation with Tamar—talking about Dr. Marion Moses and her work with the United Farm Workers—mentioning poisonous sprays, and her current studies of the use of them. Tamar spoke of Dioxin, widely used. “They are using it in this country on crops, as a weed killer and defoliant. And, in Italy, several villages had to be evacuated in 1976.” Eric, my daughter’s oldest son, came back from Vietnam with a rash from the waist down, from the jungles defoliated by our planes. The government is denying it is causing bad effect on our crops. I, myself, saw airplanes in California spraying grapes while the workers were in the fields, some years ago.

Maryhouse

Pope Paul VI died August 6, 1978—Hiroshima Day and the Feast of the Transfiguration. Two of our Catholic Worker family, Gary Donatelli and Ed Vandrovec, will be at his funeral in Rome on Saturday. Gary will then continue on his pilgrimage to Israel—and Ed will be back the following Tuesday to work at St. Rose’s Cancer Home on the Lower East Side. Other Catholic Workers, Pat Jordan, Bill Griffin and Bill Butler also work at St. Rose’s and Father Dan Berrigan volunteers there one day a week.

We watched the funeral of Pope Paul on television.

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Mass tonight in our chapel, with Father Geoffrey Gneuchs. I am reading his manuscript on the life of Peter Maurin.

Deane Mowrer came down from the Tivoli farm for her appearance in court for the sit-in at the United Nations on June 12th. Charges were dismissed. Deane had been my companion in the Women’s Prison when we refused to take shelter in the air raid drills in July, 1957. We served thirty days. Judith Malina of the Living Theater and a young woman from the F.O.R. had been our companions also.

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The **Memorare**. Sam Putnam, a Chicago city editor I worked for, gave me Huysman's **En Retour** to read—the story of a man going to a convent every evening for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and hearing that prayer recited. I went from Chicago to New Orleans, to work on the **New Orleans Item**—lived in the square between the Cathedral (where I went to Benediction every evening) and the French market on the Mississippi River. This started my conversion. Having a baby a few years later finished it. I had her baptized, and began going to Mass, myself. I received instruction from Sister Aloysia, a neighbor Sister of Charity.

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Today's visitors—Father Dan Berrigan, his brother Jerry and Jerry's wife Carol, with whom I stayed in Syracuse some years ago. Also, Margaret Lloyd, a rock enthusiast. She and I are “rock hounds,” and when she visited Egypt last year, she brought back two stones for me, one from the Nile and one from the Pyramids.

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Reading Donald Attwater's **Dictionary of the Saints** again, a Penguin paperback, and remembering Anatole France's story of Thais and Paphnutius, a story of Egypt. I looked it up and found it a true story. Mike Harank, one of our workers in town, gave me this delightful book. (Donald Attwater was a friend of Eric Gill, and a member with him in a community in Wales and in Ditchling, England.)

Staten Island

Sister Teresa, who is back from Guam for several weeks (Deo Gratias!), drove Ruth Collins and me back to the beach. Ruth is an ardent bird watcher. We have binoculars, and she can study them from the kitchen window or out on the bank.

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Frank is down, clipping hedges and cleaning up the yards of the two, little houses. The house I am in has three rooms, and an outhouse with a flush toilet and a washroom big enough to hold a washing machine, beach chairs and sundry other articles.

[Note: Dr. Karl Stern used to tell a person's health by his or her handwriting. Mine is tremulous—shaky hands—my reason for not being a good correspondent these days. An occasional answer on a postal card, perhaps!]

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We have been television fanatics this last week. On Saturday, August 26th we had a new Pope. And now, Sunday, September 3rd, everyone lucky enough to have a television set could be present at the installation of Pope John Paul I (Cardinal Albino Luciano, Patriarch of Venice, the son of a Socialist employee of a glass works, with no diplomatic experience)—a pastoral Pope!