

House of Hospitality

Dorothy Day

Chapter Nine

Summary: A summer full of trips between the Easton farm and the city, she vividly chronicles the flurry of activity that seemingly accomplishes a great deal. Struggles with issues of freedom, personal responsibility, and her role in the movement. Feels “utterly lacking, ineffective.” (DDLW #444).

1

IN THE country. My job is being cowherd. I can sit under a tree with pen and paper and write to the readers of *The Catholic Worker* and all I have to do is to see that Rosie, the Holstein, does not stray from the southeast pasture where the fences are being repaired by Francis and Eddie.

It is an irregular pasture, roughly shaped like the letter K, one end shut in by woods, the other by apple trees. It is up on a hillside and down on my left is the asparagus bed in the field below and then more sloping fields, some very steep, to the river road and the Delaware. Beyond that are more sloping fields, and hills, green and brown like a patchwork quilt. Immediately by the side of me is a hedge of raspberry bushes and a sparse clump of sumac.

There is hot sunlight after a day and night of rain which replenished the cisterns; there are sounds of woodchopping, a train in the distance, a bumble bee, the sound of the cow munching and cropping the grass.

There is also the sound of the old Ford truck operated by Jim Montague, drawing a two-horse plough guided by Cyril Echele.

We want to get the kitchen garden planted, and there is no horse nor money to buy one. Someone suggested we get one on the installment plan from a neighboring farmer, but with three dollars in the bank we would be violating principles in making so large a purchase with no money in sight. We know St. Joseph will take care of the printing bill (four hundred dollars to be paid), and the groceries which are paid for from week to week. We are frugal enough, God knows, though we have plenty on the table.

The horse and equipment will come—we will pay for it. The truck method of ploughing was recommended to us by Louis, former occupant of the farm, who now lives down the road.

We went in to see a Polish neighbor yesterday and she was just coming in from the woods with an apronful of coral mushrooms to cook up with butter gravy for supper. Here it is only May and already we have all the asparagus and rhubarb we can eat, dandelion and dockweed, mushrooms and milk. As yet we have no chickens and are buying eggs for 25 cents a dozen down the road.

To many throughout the country our farm will seem sadly inadequate as to size. In writing to correspondents in Kansas, we have to explain about intensive cultivation and producing for use. In writing to a correspondent in Belgium the other day, this was not necessary as they are limited as to space over there and understand the intensive cultivation of small parcels of land.

If we were financed our readers could say:

“Oh, it is all very well for you—you’ve got money in back of you. But what about us? How are we to start out, without stock, without funds, without hands.”

That is where the farming commune idea comes in. People can work together, can pool their resources, can think in terms of mutual aid.

2

But this account started to be a day at the farm. We are cooking on an old wood range collapsed in the middle. K. prepared vegetables, weeded, washed dishes and washed up the sloping kitchen. Bill Callahan in high boots shoveled manure into an old wagon to be towed out into the north field and scattered.

For a few early hours in the morning I had planted onion seeds, six long rows of them, and as I crouched and bent and planted, I thought of the three million children and women working in the cotton fields, from dawn to dark. I thought of the women and children in the beet fields and onion fields in the middle and far west and I thought how even the six-year-olds were pressed into the grueling service until they were deadened and worn and a deep smoldering resentment grew and grew within them, shaping them for revolution or for the flight from the soil to the cities.

After supper the boys all went out to mend a portion of the road where it comes up the hill, slanting perilously between fields. With the truck and plough they ploughed up one side, Eddie using a pick as supplementary help and Bill at work with the shovel.

But Cy had the idea of chaining a wide board behind the truck and all of them standing on it, balancing them selves with ropes, the truck pulling them along to level out the ploughed-up portion.

Washing up the supper things in the house, we didn't know what was going on until we heard loud yells of joy and triumph and went out to see the fun. The stunt worked pretty well, but in the course of the leveling one or more of the workers was always flung off into the field.

Every night, for the last week, the cow got lost, until the pasture was staked in, and wandered half a mile across fields to her former home. Margaret, in the city, told me she dreamt the cow had run away, but returned, bringing three more with her. No such luck! She wandered away all right, and Francis, Paul and Eddie had the job of pursuing her. On that evening, she was found in the pasture with six other cows, cropping peaceably away, and it wasn't until they had separated her from the rest, that they noticed the bull coming after them.

Francis didn't say how he felt, but Eddie confessed his terror. They couldn't get around to the stile but had to lift up a barbed wire fence and push the cow through. It was a moment!

Before bedtime, around nine, we all gather together, for the rosary and litany. Tonight there was a little breeze outside in the apple trees sighing around the house. The moon shone down on the hill top, washing the fields in a soft glow. There was quiet and perfect peace and a happiness so deep and strong and thankful, that even our words of prayer seemed inadequate to express our joy. May St. Isidore, patron of farm workers, pray for us and praise God for us!

3

Mott Street. Outside in the street the sun pours down but it is not too hot for the little girls to be skipping rope. St. Joseph stands in the window of *The Catholic Worker* store, surrounded by green plants, and looks out at the children.

A little while ago a funeral passed by. We were just coming from Mass and heard the band playing. On all sides of the white hearse were little girls dressed in their First Communion dresses, carrying flowers. Two men carried a mounted picture of the dead child, dressed in white surrounded with more flowers.

The sun was shining, and a little girl was dead, a little girl from one of these crowded tenements hereabouts where six children and more are crowded in three and four rooms—where the rats, as little Felicia said, are chased by her father with a broomstick.

There is sun in the street, but from the cellars and areaways a dank musty smell redolent of death rises. There is sun and gayety in the streets, and the little girls skip rope around the pushcart of pineapples, but one little girl was carried in a coffin down the street, while the band played its slow, mournful and yet triumphant dirge. She was through with this short and dangerous life which is yet so dear to us all. There is one less to skip from beneath the wheels of trucks and gather around the crowded kitchen table in the tenement. There is

one less mouth to feed, one less pair of shoes for the father (who supports eight on fifteen dollars a week) to buy.

One less little girl.

The day after tomorrow we are bringing the first batch of children down to the farm. They will be loaded on the truck with baskets of mason jars which kind friends sent in, with the blankets other poor families contributed for them, with the cots the seamen have been sleeping on in our hospice.

It is our readers who are making this possible, who have sent us in seventy-five dollars all told to pay for the food for these young ones. There are about fifty children we have promised to bring down to the country, and there is seventy-five dollars to feed them with.

If it seems too brutal to tell of the funeral which we saw this morning, we can only say that life down here is filled with these contrasts of brutal facts, and self-sacrifice and patience. Our lives are checkered in this way with violence and death, sunlight and joy.

Some of those very seamen who were clubbed on the picket line are down in the country right now fixing up the place for the children who are coming on Saturday. And one of our readers who is on relief sent in a dollar to help feed our charges.

4

We are developing the idea we have long had of the lay apostolate, and there are now amongst us enough fellow workers to send out into the fields and factories to work and attract new followers of *The Catholic Worker* movement. This last month four young fellows hitch-hiked from the farm down to southern New Jersey to work on the commercial farms. One of them is going to enter the seminary, and the work he has been doing this summer only adds to his preparedness for the life that is before him. Another one of the Catholic Workers has gone down to work in the steel mills, and yet another has gone up to New England to get a job in any factory that suits his fancy. Two others are going out this month to yet another factory in the New York district.

During this last month there have been about fourteen children at the farm all told. A few of them went back to the city because they were homesick, but two of the boys were so delighted with farm life that they have learned to milk the cow, hoe the corn and raid the grapevine of one of our neighbors. Fortunately, it is a friendly neighbor, a Communitarian himself.

The four police dog puppies presented to us by this same neighbor are about as uproarious as the children. Three of them are black and tan, but one, Teresa says, is peach colored. Little Annie is probably the most vociferous of the children. Coming down to the farm in the truck, she surveyed the wide fields and woods

and exclaimed on the size of the park we were passing through. Eleanor can tap dance like a professional, and her neatest trick is to tie tin cans to her feet and dance on them. The noise is very satisfying. Bernice is her big sister. She is ten and Eleanor is eight, and it was a great sight to see the motherly little girl scrubbing down her dusky sister Saturday night so that her delicious brown skin was all but veiled in soapsuds. Mary Giogas, who is Greek, did a lot of sewing out under the apple trees for her little sister Annie, who had a new dress to wear practically every day. She needed lots of clothes, so the rag bag was raided often for pieces. Her face looked tattooed after the many slices of bread and elderberry jam which she consumed, and, as for her dresses, she looked good in what she ate, Loretta said.

5

During the month there was a grand festa in town which extended all around Mott Street, but we were at the center of the whirlpool, inasmuch as one of our neighbors in the front house is president of the association which runs the festa for the Feast of the Assumption and the Feast of St. Roche. The noise was tremendous. It began with a band of fifty coming into our backyard and sitting on planks for their concert practice which lasted two hours and ended in quite a bit of wine drinking and a fight.

Outside the streets were aglow with color and light and booths were set up to sell all kinds of fruit and nuts. Charcoal stoves were working overtime preparing sweet corn and broiled sausages and liver. There was a bandstand and free-lance orchestras and dancing up and down the street. All day, every day, there were processions and banners, and Saturday night with lightning adding fireworks to the show, the statue of the Blessed Virgin was escorted with many maids of honor and children in white, carrying lighted candles and bouquets of flowers up and down the winding streets, Mott Street and Mulberry Street, Hester and Canal, blessing them all.

Our latest guest at St. Joseph's house is a Russian boy who was injured in the Gastonia textile strike in 1931 in a clash with a picket. Boris was a national guardsman and received a clout over the head which landed him in the hospital for eight months. Our opponents, the upholders of violent revolution as a means to achieving peace, would consider him a class enemy inasmuch as he was on the opposite side in a strike. But realizing that our conflict is with principalities and powers rather than with human beings, we see in Boris a fellow member of the Mystical Body, badly in need of indoctrination.

Eddie Priest came in this evening begrimed by toil and much in need of a shave. He's taking a turn at the lay apostolate in industry (and working for much needed cash!) and his job is spot welding, assembling, working a drill press, a punch press, and a hand metal brake in a sheet metal works in Brooklyn. His job is from eight to five-thirty, with forty-five minutes for lunch, and there are fourteen fellow-workers, all youths.

6

The way the priest at the Church of the Transfiguration goes up to the altar with out-stretched arms in the morning, the humble reverence of the Franciscan at the Church of the Precious Blood on Baxter Street as he kneels at “The Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us,” the gallant and tender figure of St. Joseph clasping the Christ Child at that same church, the willing cooperation of all the workers around Mott Street this turbulent month when there was so much moving to be done, and all the work of the paper had to go on—these were some of the things which put us in mind of the love of God this past few days.

We picketed St. Joseph this past month, when we were sending out an appeal—asking him to take care of our temporal necessities, as he had to take care of the temporal necessities of the Blessed Mother and the Infant Jesus during those long hidden years at Nazareth. It was a peaceful and loving picketing, the crowd of us taking turns to go to the church and there in the presence of Christ our Leader, contemplate St. Joseph, that great friend of God, and Protector of His Church. One of the girls in St. Joseph’s house, when we announced the picketing at the breakfast table, wanted to know, very startled, whether she would have to carry a sign.

“Be faithful to our time of prayer rather than to our words. For instance fifteen minutes before and after Communion. In the middle of the day as well at night. And ejaculatory prayers as often as possible”.—Archbishop Goodier, S. J.

7

In the country the material and the spiritual have their proper relationship. There one can wholeheartedly say that the material is good; that it is good to enjoy the material things of this world; that one can love the world and God Who made it, and not be a materialist and separated from Him.

Teresa is following the ploughman and gathering worms for the three ducks and the chickens. The pastor of our church in Easton came up to see us and was introduced to the fourteen or so at the Catholic Worker farm. He has impressed us all, because on meeting us he maintained a proper reserve which was without suspicion. There are several ways of being catechized in regard to the paper, its project and aims. Very often we are questioned with suspicion with the attitude, “You’re guilty until I know you are innocent.”

Yesterday I went down to see Sister Edith who is the principal of the Catholic High School here in Easton. She is going to co-operate with us and already is arranging for us to speak, both before the students and the parent-teacher groups. Also, groups of high school students are going to come up to the farm during the summer.

Most of the Catholics in Easton are industrial workers and it is very hard to keep the church and school going. The high school building is not large, but

every inch of it is utilized for class rooms and library, and during the vacation months, Sister Edith allows the unemployed young men who are graduates of the school to hang around the building, use the library and have a special room for themselves to congregate and smoke in.

While I was talking to her, I heard children's voices around the convent and she told me how she took in some of the children of employed mothers to care for them during the day. She certainly seems to be one of these people who does with all her might whatsoever her hand findeth to do.

8

6:00 A.M. "This," says John Griffin, working over his flower bed where he is doing some early transplanting, "is rather a masculine bed, strong in line and color—but this one—ah, that will be a tender little one." And he hovered over the portulaca, spotting weeds.

The sun came up over the mist in the valley at five-thirty this morning, and the rooster perched on the water barrel under the apple tree and crowed; the hens clucked, the ducks quacked and the hound dog raced a few last times around the lower meadow, barking hoarsely. He had made a night of it.

John has done all the work beautifying the house on the outside. Flower beds enclosed by rustic fences, terraces, rock walk, a flight of steps leading down into the asparagus bed at the head of which I am now sitting.

Already the sun is beginning to get hot. Paul, the earliest riser, is taking the cow up the hill. She is his special care; and under his ministrations she has become an affectionate pet. The other evening while we sat out under the trees, she went from one to the other of us, licking our hands and breathing her strong herbish breath into our faces.

John Cort has gone out to harrow the west field with a rake, preparatory to our last planting. Victor is going on with the cultivating of the sweet potatoes. Julia has wandered on down to Easton to the seven o'clock Mass, leaving all her charges, the five Giogas children, sound asleep in bed.

They say they like the farm "more better" than the Huguenot place. "Are we coming to a different place every year?" they want to know, thinking of the ground the C. W. has already covered. They are working right along with us, the children are, picking gooseberries and weeding the asparagus bed where there is no danger of mistaking vegetables for weeds.

This morning the work includes jam making and delousing the children and writing an article. And then I'll crawl along the row of two-inch high beets for an hour and do some weeding.

I had intended to do some reading this early morning, and I have beside me a treatise on prayer, and *Labor and Steel*. But this spot where I am sitting is

no place for reading. For praying, yes, but every spot around here says to us “Sursum Corda.”

On the hillside writing letters. Hot, but with a breeze. We all went to 8 o'clock Mass; Carney, Michael Flynn, Francis, Paul, Griffin, Gibson, Jim, Eddie, Pat, Kate, Mary, Steve and I. Last Sunday Carney got the Professor to go for the first time in years. Gibson is going to Confession this Saturday for the first time in seventeen years. The boys don't know how much good they can do by translating the spiritual into the material as they are doing.

Awoke at five, as the sun came up. Five men already up. Gibson had coffee ready and a roaring fire in the stove, although already, early as it was, it promised to be a very hot day. I started reading Lauds, but more got up. At 7:30 Mass, five of us; and then over to Dr. Koiransky's to get a setting hen and rooster. A mile from the place we heard a steady ringing noise filling the air, the kind of noise you hear going under ether. It persisted over the noise of the rattling truck (and a bad road at that) and we could not imagine what it was. When we got to Dr. Koiransky's, his farmer told us it was the seven-year locust which, for the last few days, had descended upon them. The sound of the insects is ominous.

About chickens. The doctor's housekeeper was telling us many things. A special box the chickens like so that they wait in line to lay in it. About cycles—the eggs get smaller and smaller during the month and then reach normal size again. First they lay early in the day, then later and later; the afternoon eggs being the small ones. It must be the moon. While you are saving eggs for a setting hen, you must turn them every two days. If she wishes to set she will collect the eggs from the other hens herself, rolling them to her nest.

The doctor's cow is a pet. She is red-brown, wears a Swiss bell, and loves to put her head in the back door.

Last night we said the rosary out under the trees, praying for rain. The moon was coming up. There was a smell of sweet clover in the air and it was very quiet. Carney led. Now there are nineteen of us.

It is still very dry and a lot of planting and transplanting to do yet. Seed potatoes have gone up to five dollars a bushel. The work is coming along fine and the place is beginning to look as though people lived there who loved it. John Griffin with his flower garden and his statue of the Blessed Virgin, put up as a prayer for water. The wall which Flynn built, the weeding out of the gooseberry bushes and rhubarb, by Steve; Mr. O'Connell's screen door; the gardening by Paul, Ordway, etc., the harrowing by Hughes and D'Orsay—all these things have been going on last week.

9

Sunday. Mott Street again. For the last four days an awful spell of heat, the worst in forty years they say. All night people sit out in the streets, mothers

holding their heavy sleeping babies. Sprinkling trucks spray the garbage up from the gutters on to the sidewalks and steamy fetid odors rise and choke one. The heat does not bother me as the smell does.

We have a house full of invalids. Charlie Rich is sick with the heat. Never well at any time because of his stomach ulcers, he goes around reading the Office of the Dead, his eyes heavy and his face drawn.

L. has been out on a drunk and is lying trembling in his room while he is here. He has just stolen five dollars from me, the money we had to send the sharecroppers package of clothes, and he must be tormented in soul as well as in body.

Harold Medonet, in the same room with them is well; working now and paying off his debts. He has just finished a milk driver's job which almost finished him. He was working eighteen hours a day. Also on the top floor are Rush, left over from the elevator strike, an elderly man; Joe from Arizona, a tramp boy; Ordway, an exseminarian, formerly with a Trappist monastery in Kentucky.

Mr. Breen has also been sick this week. He has delusions constantly.

"They are making fun of the Church," he screamed suddenly yesterday. "They are pretending to perform a baptism in the speakeasy in the front." (The speakeasy where they sell wine night and day to singing, roistering laborers who all but murder each other when they are bawling out Sardinian songs, adds to the general unrest.)

Katherine is lamenting my ultimatum about her cat which has gone about soiling the house. Beatrice, Celia and Ruth are well and happy. But Kate Smith who is sharing my room is just back from the hospital. Her tumor on the brain is irremovable.

Rosemary is in the country. Frank and Loretta are in town. A new woman from Kentucky, Caroline they call her, is staying with us. Carney came in from the farm today also suffering from aberrations. It is not the time of the full moon, but he says July is always a bad month for him. He accuses everyone of racketeering, of talking about him, of wanting to put him away, and threatens violence. He says also he was warned to lay low until the Triborough bridge was completed, that he was not a member of the religious community and that he had been followed down to the Philadelphia convention by someone who said in his ear, "So Dorothy Day only gave you a dollar." He is definitely in a bad way.

10

At the Farm. Fish soup is cooking, also beet greens for one o'clock lunch. I've been canning tomatoes all morning—12 quarts—and my hands are so tired I can scarcely write. A perfect day for working, good breeze. I'm sitting out under the old apple tree, on a very good but not very handsome bench that John Griffin made out of an unused shutter. The three ducks are trying to take a bath in

front of me. The drake is constantly biting at the neck of one of the ducks and she turns and returns the caress. Then they both lift themselves preeningly and raise their wings and flutter. The rooster and one hen are sharing a worm and murmuring together.

John Griffin has gone into town to see about collecting some money owing to him and on his return we'll probably go out and buy two pigs. John Curran drove him and five homesick kids to town in the morning, which leaves two. Griffin would have hitch-hiked, only Curran had to call for some pitchforks and shovels at Mrs. Williams in Short Hills. Mary is also away, visiting her friend in the Oranges. Jim, Bill and the kids are down getting Frank and Loretta and the baby. And now there is a lunch to get on the table. Everything is very peaceful, but there has been some controversy as to whether Carney should be down.

11

Mott Street again.

One P.M., and I am most comfortably settled in the extra apartment in the front house which Miss Burke turned over to us. It will be good to be able to sit up and work in the evening and not worry about waking Kate up.

Today was very full. I arrived in New York at 9:30 and little Dan met me, thinking I was carrying a suitcase of tomatoes, but Rufus, Sylvia, Margaret Bigham and Tom set out with them by car yesterday. (They have not yet arrived here.)

First of all a long discussion with John about personalism, hospitality, state responsibility and organized charity. (He was objecting to caring for such people as A.,B.,C.,D.,E., etc.). It was a long one. He is very conscientious and sticks to the job of being in the office, seeing people, indoctrinating, spiritual reading at the table, etc. I am very critical with him, but I do think he is a good worker.

Then Carney—I told him he could not go down to Easton now, and I think it came as a great shock to him. He told John later, very threateningly, that he was going to write letters to certain people about us, that we are racketeers and not doing our duty by him. (Some of the duties are to provide him with clothes, a commutation ticket to Easton which costs eighty dollars, better food, and security from persecution).

Mr. M. came next, telling me of his hunger and suffering, his quarrel with Rosemary over taking stuff from the kitchen. I must give Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* to Rosemary to read. She manages beautifully usually but sometimes there is a conflict.

Then came Ed. He was to have sailed Saturday, but before sailing the entire ship got drunk and he fell off the wagon, too, and was fired. He was feeling like hell about it and swears he won't go to sea any more; it will be the same thing

over again. He was too confident, after going to daily Mass and Communion. It's always the way. Thank God he came back at once. I would have felt badly if he had not. He's all right now, is going down to the farm tomorrow to help with the barn and road-mending, and thence to Bethlehem to try for a job as a steel worker.

Talked to Julia about the children who are next going down, then about the Legion of Mary which she's working with in Father Rothlauf's Parish.

Father Eustace from Dunwoodie in for an hour and we talked about the Fascists in Spain, the rural workers in New Jersey. While he was here, Father O'Loughlin from Turin, newly ordained, came in and gave us his blessing. He was only here a moment. He has been getting the paper since the seventh issue.

Texas, Clark, Arizona, were the next on the program and I suggested they go down to the bean and tomato farms in southern New Jersey (which are beginning to assume the aspect of the salt mines of Siberia) and join Eddie Priest, Ordway, Bergen and the other seminarian, for a month. Our funds are so low (the electric and telephone are being shut off Wednesday, but we were able to send the CO-OP \$35 today, thank God.) just now Texas, Clark and Arizona are singing in the yard, "It don't mean a thing if you wake up and sing in the morning," and various other songs. The Italian girls from the neighborhood join them, leaning out of their windows. Now it has started to rain and they have had to go inside, but they are still strumming on an old ukelele of Stanley's. It scandalizes people that they all have such a good time; but where should they go—to pool rooms, down along the waterfront? Why shouldn't they make a hangout of the place? They get a good deal of serious conversation with people like John Cort, the reading at the table; Rosemary does her share, trying to get them back to Mass, etc. They can't be serious all the time. Arizona has worked at restaurant jobs, Clark on pleasure yachts as a seaman, and Tex also was a seaman.

Late in the evening, a Dutchman, Jocham, came in telling us of the work of a great priest in Holland. Jocham was a seaman, a steward for fifteen years on the Mallory Line, and now is on home relief. He is sixty years old.

12

Downstairs in the yard there are a dozen men sitting at long tables, drinking wine. The yard is decorated with benches and electric lights, as is all the street in front for blocks around.

Today is the last day of the festa celebrating the Assumption.

I went to the farm Wednesday night, and came in to town yesterday morning after five-thirty Mass. A fearfully close day, hard to breathe.

This feast day is a happy one for me, and filled with resolutions. First to pay every possible attention to my own soul as Father Lallemant stresses. Again a rule of

life to be determined on; more time spent in prayer. I shall start again trying to make that Six A. M. Mass, so that I can have time for thanksgiving, meditation and reading early in the morning. There is so much to do; people require so much of one; there are always callers and letters, and, in this neighborhood constant noise. And in the country the same demands made upon me, work to participate in, etc. So I must do more to guard every moment and keep recollected. I can help people far more then, anyway.

“And he that ministereth seed to the sower, will both give you bread to eat, and increase the growth of the fruits of your justice.” 2 *Corinthians*, 9-10.

13

Low in mind all day, full of tears. Got up at six to wash leftover milk pails and get breakfast, talked to Bill about the *Newman News* and Ordway about marriage, and jobs, Mass at 7:40.

Bill and John Curran, Bergen and Ordway went in to New York to distribute papers at a Communist rally at Madison Square Garden. Mary got fifty dollars from her sister and contributed it to the grocery fund.

What with the Easton, New York, Boston, Ottawa, Toronto, and Missouri groups, all discouraged, all looking for organization instead of self-organization, all of them weary of the idea of freedom and personal responsibility—I feel bitterly oppressed, yet confirmed in the conviction that we have to emphasize personal responsibility at all costs. It is most certainly at the price of bitter suffering for myself. For I am just in the position of a dictator trying to legislate himself out of existence. They accept my regime which emphasizes freedom and personal responsibility, but under protest. They all complain at the idea of there being this freedom in town and here, that there is no boss.

Today I just happened to light on Dostoevsky’s *Grand Inquisitor* which was most apropos. Freedom—how men hate it and chafe under it, how unhappy they are with it.

On Sunday night in town I read Maritain’s *Freedom and The Modern World*. I read while the Italians out side sang and shouted their allegiance to Mussolini. It was hard concentrating then just as it is hard now with all the gnat-like disturbances incidental to life in a community.

This week, Eleanor and Bernice, two colored children, and Mary and Annie Giogas are down and they are singing and dancing all the day. I should be happy to see them, products of Harlem, and Ed Keohane and Charlie Keefe, lower west side, enjoying the country so much. John Griffin with his beautiful flower garden; Dave after two years in jail; these children, invalids and unemployed ones; but I have satisfaction in nothing.

“Are we trying to make a farm here or aren’t we?”

A statement of that kind, an attitude of criticism of all that Peter and I stand for, has the power to down me completely, so that I feel utterly incapable of going to Boston and meeting all their trials and discouragements. Nothing but the grace of God can help me, but I feel utterly lacking, ineffective.

In town the usual crosses; Carney calling us all racketeers, calling the spiritual reading pious twaddle. E. with his vile accusations; the misery of M. and P.; Kate's illness; the threatened suit against us; the bills piling up these things to be topped by such a lack of understanding of the personalist idea from those you expect the most from, lays me low. Since I got back from Pittsburgh, I have this completely alone feeling. A temptation of the devil, doubtless, and to succumb to it is a lack of faith and hope. There is nothing to do but bear it, but my heart is as heavy as lead, and my mind dull and uninspired. A time when the memory and understanding fail one completely, and only the will remains, so that I feel hard and rigid, and at the same time ready to sit like a soft fool and weep.

Tonight Teresa had a nose bleed, a head-ache and a stomach-ache, and although the latter probably came from eating green pears, as she confessed, still to think of the little time I have with her, being constantly on the go, having to leave her to the care of others, sending her away to school so that she can lead a regular life and not be subject to the moods and vagaries of the crowd of us! This is probably the cruellest hardship of all. She is happy, she does not feel torn constantly as I do. And then the doubt arises, probably she too feels that I am failing her, just as the crowd in Mott Street and the crowd here feel it.

"You are always away."

And then when I get to Boston—"This is your work, why are you not up here more often?"

Never before have I had such a complete sense of failure, of utter misery.

"O spiritual soul, when thou seest thy desire obscured, thy will and arid constrained, and thy faculties incapable of any interior act, be not grieved at this, but look upon it rather as a great good, for God is delivering thee from thyself, taking the matter out of thy hands. . . . The way of suffering is safer, and also more profitable, than that of rejoicing and of action. In suffering, God gives strength, but in action and in joy the soul does but show its own weakness and imperfections."—St. John of the Cross.

"Personality is compounded of the body with its appetites and the soul with its rational will; concupiscence springs from original sin and leads to actual sin; it often anticipates reason and is thus a hindrance to the good a man really wants to do: unwished for uprising of temper is a good instance."—St. Thomas.

At the Farm. Rain and cool weather. Everything is soaked from a steady downpour. Mary and Kate are doing up tomatoes. John F. is pruning the tree. Joe has to take it easy because of a cracked rib. Frank Mammano has a festered finger. Steve is sick in bed. Jim has gone to see about fencing for the pigs

with Teresa, Eddie and Charlie and the other kids. Carney is working on the Studebaker. Bill is preparing to go to town.

14

In Boston for three days. Spoke to large outside group, and they collected forty dollars. Nothing in the bank and two checks bouncing. Father Sullivan here with Doctor O'Brien from Fordham, and friends. Free-for-all fight on personalism and Fascism. At Mary McSweeney's for the night. Summer school Friday, and met Father Lord, D. Willman, etc. Went to one of McDonald's classes on co-ops. Met Doctor Sullivan at three. Meeting at Lowell at eight. Stayed at Mary Ryan's. Left for summer school where I did not have to speak. Father S. till two. So did not see much of our C. W. crowd and will have to go back September 9th. Took boat at five for New York. Still low and dragged out. Feeling nothing accomplished.

During this week, August 24-28. Saw Mr. Sheed for lunch, Father Reinhold from Germany, McDonough, the organizer of the fishermen of Boston, Mr. Moody, and any number of people from summer school, where I spoke Thursday, ineffectively, breaking down as to voice right on the platform. Mr. Schwartz drove me down here where the atmosphere is morose and the weather does not help. Reading Caussade and New Testament and hiding my sadness from others does help.