

On Pilgrimage - May 1960

Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, May 1960, 2, 7, 8.

Summary: Describes a speaking trip to Vancouver, Oregon, and San Francisco. Admires the varied apostolic works of the people she visits as examples of service to the common good. (DDLW #764).

This month of May, on the eve of the compulsory air raid drill and not knowing whether we are to be serving a sentence for our usual civil disobedience, I want to get caught up on my western trip, owing our readers this report. bob Steed wants to get the paper out on May second, so he too can accompany us to prison on the third, if we are to be sentenced. Charles Butterworth and Judith Gregory will have charge of St. Joseph's loft and the office while we are away. But let us hope that we do not have to go to prison.

One year of the five we have put on our protest, we received a suspended sentence; on the other three we have been five, thirty and fifteen days behind bars. It is in a way a retreat, a voluntary crucifixion. A sharing of the suffering and destitution in the world, so much of which is brought about by war and the preparations for war.

Wednesday, Feb. 24

When I left the Doukhobors, Lusha, young Pete Maloff and his wife were on their way to pray for the dead, both in the home of the relatives of the deceased and at the grave – to pray and to sing some of their poignant, Russian hymns. I took the bus at 9 a.m. to Trail, transferred to a bus to Vancouver. A very clear day and the mountains were beautiful. I arrived at nearly one a.m. in Vancouver and there was a wildly drunken woman in the station, throwing her pocket book around and cursing. I found a little hotel near the station and slept like a log until eight the next morning. Mass and then later in the afternoon visited the Little Sisters of Jesus in a poor and very mixed neighborhood. There were Russian, Ukrainian and Chinese churches in the neighborhood. Sister Anne Cecile works in a laundry from 8:30 to 5:30 and Sister Therese Alice works half time in a home for aged Chinese. It took four months for Sister Ann Cecile to find work so she knew the misery of the unemployed, being turned away from jobs. She is from France and Sister Therese Alice is from Montreal. She has been one summer on a far north Indian mission. The fraternity on Little Diamede Island from which one can see Siberia, is finished, that is most of the little house. The two Little Sisters had been cleaning the shed and garden. Crocuses were up and in bloom. Narcissus, daffodil and other bulbs too. A tiny plot, even under the stairs. There was wood piled in

the kitchen. We had a cup of jasmine tea. there is a small chapel in the front room. There are 700 little sisters altogether and their life is one of manual labor and poverty. In spite of crocuses showing their face, it is 32 degrees tonight.

Poverty

We all drove out to the Indian mission where Joan McGreigie is teaching, a forty mile drive but people think nothing of these distances out here. We saw Mt. Hood on the way out. We had supper with the sisters of St. Ann who are in Montreal, Worcester and Vancouver. They have many volunteers giving them a year, and two colleges who have students helping them are Gonzaga and their college at Worcester. The mission here dates from 1861. Very old buildings, antique fifty year old laundry equipment. Two hundred and fifty Indian children in crowded dormitories in the many widely spaced buildings. The children have to go from one building, far off to another building to the toilet, through snow and cold. They are a healthy looking lot, however, and happy.

We got home by eleven p.m. Slept well in Joan's room and took the bus the next day at 12:30 arriving at Seattle at 4:45 to find my niece Sue and her husband Mike there to meet me, a very pleasant surprise. He is a micro meteorologist, research assistant at University of Washington and has spent a year in Alaska (part of the geophysical year.) Sue is teaching high school literature and takes a great interest in the progress of her students, their growth in reading enjoyment and ability to think and express themselves.

Saturday, Feb. 27.

A good loafing day with visits to the St. Vincent de Paul market by the water, a long alley along the waterfront with stalls of clothes and books and plenty of space along the docks for second hand fixtures and furniture. A cold wind but sunny..

Sunday Feb. 28.

Picnic on Bainbridge Island in the afternoon and a meeting at Isabel MacRae's afterward with the old Catholic Worker crowd and some new young ones, such as Al Krebs and his wife Margaret.

Tues., March 1.

Father Axer, S.P. teacher of philosophy and theology chaired the meeting today in the students' lounge at Seattle University right after the noon Mass. It lasted until three and we had to wait to break our fast, but it was good to see the students so interested. Our good friend whom I met first in 1941, Fr. Bischoff was there.

March 2.

Fr. Dooley, O.P. sent some students to pick me up to visit the Newman club. Had lunch with Julie Zeh, member of the Anvil Club. Robt. Casey, our seaman friend called for me at five and we went to dinner and then after Benediction to a meeting with about a dozen active in the labor movements, seamen, longshoremen. Home at eleven.

March 3.

Heavy snow, most unusual for Seattle. Dinner at Professor David's. He is head of Romance language department of University of Washington. Afterward to a meeting where Fr. Boylan, Cistercian, gave a talk on the supernatural life. Great refreshment. He told me afterward that he prays for us daily, God bless him. He had been giving a retreat at the Trappist Abbey of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

March 4.

Sue made a perfect pizza for dinner and afterwards we went to my last meeting in Seattle, to which John Crawford had invited me. John had been to my meeting at Seattle University, which is a Jesuit college, he himself attending the Univ. of Washington. The meeting was held on a house boat named Bilgewater and was made up of a group of people who had been dining together and had invited other guests in later. We had also been invited. Several proclaimed themselves atheists before the meeting started and the host who was barefooted and bearded was a teacher of mathematics. The meeting was good and the questions intelligent, but one young man who had a lot of wine kept the meeting to a dialogue which must have been a bore to the rest. When I left he started reading aloud a psychotic poem from **Howl** a beatnik magazine.

March 5. Portland

Dorothy Farnworth came to the station to meet me. Dorothy and I are members of the Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Charles de Foucauld so it was like seeing a sister. She has a house near the Dominican Church and across the way from Stella Maris, a center where three of Catherine Dougherty's Combermere group provide library and meeting place and center for all Catholic Action groups in Portland. They are also a secular institute in formation.

Dorothy's house was a little center of the works of mercy. She herself works with a training center for the deaf, and she had several girls staying with her who pay room rent (they are members of the Y.C.W.) and several others who need her help such as a mother and deaf daughter who had come to the city to try to get training for the daughter, and whose funds had run out. There was also a young woman, half Eskimo who had been placed in a mental hospital when she was orphaned and because she was deaf and there was no place else to put her. By sponsoring her Dorothy was able to obtain her liberty and now she was working at

the Good Will Industries. We spent the evening with Hans Furth and talked of problems of the deaf, and the work which Hans was going to undertake at the Catholic University. He has been studying the psychology of the deaf and the best ways of enabling them to communicate with their fellows. Before the evening was over we had a delightful hour of music. Hans is a pianist and always ready to treat his friends to concert.

A Child's Death

I was deeply grieved to hear of John and Pat Little's loss of their six months old baby, from pneumonia. This last time I visited Portland, John and Pat were engaged and carefree. John was in charge of the Blanchet House of Hospitality and Pat in charge of Friendship House. Now grief had visited them.

Sunday March 6.

This afternoon I visited the Precious Blood monastery which Catherine Temple had introduced me to many years before. It is a center of prayer for a group of contemplative nuns and after we had spent an hour in the chapel we visited the nuns. Then in the evening there was a meeting in the Dominican Hall which Stella Maris uses and there was a good group. I was delighted to see Catherine Temple there, after hearing from the nuns that she had been anointed after a heart attack. Her son is the Provincial of the Franciscans on the West Coast.

March 7, Monday.

Mass at Stella Maris this morning and afterwards breakfast with Abbot Columban of Guadalupe. Abbey who had offered the Mass. Later I had breakfast at noon again with Fr. Norton, O.P., the pastor of the parish church and he spoke of his devotion to the Holy Name, and I told him of the pamphlet of the Monks of St. Sergius "***On the Invocation of the Name".** Later I met Madeleine Furth and went through the impressive building of the Good Will Industries where many are employed and many things are for sale. One could furnish one's home from this warehouse, and it was cheerfully laid out and the workshops and stores crowded. I myself purchased my spring coat there for \$1.50.

Mount Angel College

In the evening I drove out to Mt. Angel with Mary Mannion and her fiancé, through a driving rain and back again, a very long trip for so brief a visit with our friends the Mannions.

Tuesday, March 8.

In the morning to visit Catherine Temple in her delightful little house on the side of Mt. Tabor; then to the Blanchet House of Hospitality where 1,300 men had just been fed, as

they are fed each day in a big dining room which is clean and tastefully decorated. Margaret Haynes and Mary Ellen Martin had been driving me around and we sat down to dinner together. The men who had been doing the cooking and serving put on the most delightful meal of a dozen courses, it seemed like to me. Anyway they were emptying their ice boxes and showing the quality of the food and the service. What a group, and what good mutual aid! This work was started by a group of graduates from Portland University. After their graduation, these young students become business men also did a fine job of public relations for the house. It takes a lot of doing to convince the respectable that there is a need to feed 1,300 to 1,500 a day and that these men are workers who for one reason or another are temporarily or permanently out of work. Men over forty-five too young for social security or pensions and too old to get jobs, young men disabled, men with ruptures and other disabilities which may make the employer liable for workmen's compensation in case of accident and so causing increased insurance—all kinds of men and all kinds of conditions besides those of alcoholism or mental disturbance put men on a soup line. But here as in San Francisco, the men are served far more than soup. Sixty men are put up in the hotel upstairs and in addition there is another house for men out of prison, who are paroled to the group. Wayne Keith is in charge of this house, and John O'Keefe at Blanchet House. The latter is going to get married next month and they are looking for a replacement for him I have never seen a house better run.

About a score of students at Reed College talked of the ideas of **the Catholic Worker** in a meeting in the school lounge and since three girls had been arrested for picketing in the newspaper strike which has been going on here for five hours, they were much interested in prisons. Some of the young men from Reed had been held over the weekend.

March 9, Wednesday.

Bertha Skeely drove me to Maryhurst where I was also speaking. Met Larry Doyle's sister-in-law and about the same time, back home, the Doyles were visiting Peter Maurin Farm from their home on Long Island, and bringing some raspberry bushes to plant when the ground thawed a little. Larry was one of the CW editors in 1934.

From the great friendliness of all the students, I could see what a great friend we have in Sister Mirian Teresa. In the afternoon two of the Sisters and Bertha accompanied me to a meeting of the Women's Prison Council at Stella Maris house. Very good work and attitude, somewhat like that of the Friendly Visitors in New York, of which Mrs. Olava Rambusch is the head.

At 5:30 Dorothy Farnworth and I drove out to the Franciscan Sisters at Palatine Hill to talk to the novices and they are going to start praying that our landlord give us the house where we are using the third floor in New York! He will be surprised to see this and to know that he is being so prayed for. Since he has sons and grandsons who are in business with him, it will take some praying!

Thursday, March 10.

Fr. Richard Laurick invited me to speak to the students at Portland University and Mike Buckhartsmeier and Chuck Moran were much interested in our program. I told them of the need at the House of Hospitality and of how students sometimes gave us a year or so to serve the poor. After the meeting, Mass with the Gelineau Psalms, very beautiful. The introit, offertory and communion psalm are sung. Lunch and then to Archbishop Howard who is an old friend, and we had such a good visit that I all but missed the train which I had to take this time to meet engagements. The Archbishop kept me until 4:30 (the train left at 4:45.) He walks to and from his work, a mile each way and has not changed at all since I was here last in 1952.

It was a crowded train and hard to sleep, jammed in as we were. In the moonlight I saw Mt. Shasta for an hour as we rode over some plateau, white and luminous. Woke to the trees and blossoms, and poppies and palms. We were in San Francisco in time for breakfast which I enjoyed with Ellen Ryan who met me at the station, fed me and took me to the Madonna Residence, which is run for elderly ladies on pension. That sounds very elegant, and the hotel which Fr. Alfred had bought with reckless faith, was a good one opposite the library, but it was actually for the poor, for those on small pensions, the meager pensions which meant tiny furnished rooms, and church the only place to spend the day. That was how Fr. Alfred got the idea, seeing the number of elderly women constantly in St. Boniface Church of which he is the pastor.

True Franciscans

The old hotel for women pensioners, with Christ rooms for the needy was started three years ago and Josephine Gardner who is librarian at the Serra Library and who invited me to be the guest in one of the Christ rooms is the one to get in contact with if you want to know what is going on not only at St. Boniface but also in San Francisco. She is the center, just as Nina Polcyn is the center for us in Chicago, at her St. Benet book shop. Libraries and book shops are good places to hang around. One meets everyone there. Josephine and Ellen and Bill Queen and Walter Carr and I had supper and heard the Mikado afterward I one of these little theaters a few doors from the hotel.

Bill Queen had started the Akron House of Hospitality and also another house in Pittsburgh besides helping in St. Joseph's House in Pittsburgh. Walter Carr is a musician and has a room in one of the many buildings owned by the Franciscans just off Market Street, where he can practice his music three hours a day. He also is a mainstay of St. Anthony's kitchen where sixteen hundred meals are served daily cafeteria style, all one can eat, including milk and pie. I wish we could do things up as well in New York.

A Center For The Poor

But we need a Father Alfred in New York, a man who is not "afraid to go into debt for the poor," as Pope Pius XII urged. St. Boniface is an old church and always full. There is always

something going on there, novenas, rosaries, stations of the Cross, and of course the Holy Sacrifice. Mass each day at five p.m. as well as early morning and noon, and all the Masses crowded. There is a school, a monastery, a clinic, the dining room, an employment service, a credit union and a cooperative, besides the Madonna Residence, the Library and information center. There are the offices of THE WAY, of which Fr. Brendan is editor, and for which our friends Frank Scully and the late Ted Le Berthon used to write regularly. There is many an interesting article on poverty and war, man and the state in this small mission magazine.

Fr. Urusov

Sunday morning and a beautiful bus trip up and down the hills of San Francisco going to the Sunday Liturgy at the Russian Center, Our Lady of Fatima Church. A beautiful chapel, a shrine in the garden, a well sung liturgy and afterwards lunch with twenty people, a delightful Russian Lenten meal, no eggs, milk, meat, but fish and rolls with chopped vegetables inside and various other things. I can well see how the Russian housewife helps her family keep Lenten fast, by preparing very delightfully and with great variety everything that is permitted. The old mansion which houses the chapel, living quarters, library and reading rooms of the center used a kindergarten school and much work was needed to make it suitable for the priests. Fr. Urusov showed me around—he did a great deal of the manual labor himself—and when we got to his living quarters his bedroom turned out to be a large extra bathroom with a piece of plywood over the tub to serve as a bed!

Monday, March 14.

Interview with bright young man from the **Monitor** who complained that if one was too Christian one could not be a patriot—that Christianity brought about the fall of the Roman empire! He said he wished to be **both** Roman and Christian. He wrote a very good interview and took a very good picture, but ended his interview with me (this was the diocesan paper) by quoting me as saying that if Russia invaded the U.S. of course we would fight! Meaning us **Catholic Workers!** Ammon Hennacy complains too of the times he is misquoted, over and over again by both diocesan and secular press.

As an illustration, he had said that when he was in solitary in Atlanta during the first World war, he read the Bible through and became a Christian, but not an orthodox one. The paper quoted him as saying that at the present he is a Christian and a Catholic but not an orthodox one. He had said firmly to the reporter that he was a Catholic and believed all the Catholic Church teaches. Only God can protect us from such errors.

To the Brabecks for dinner, before the evening meeting at the St. Boniface Hall. She is from Baltimore and knew Fr. Roy. He runs a hotel at which up to sixty men are sheltered free, Fr. Caralin, Paulist supplying the money. There is always much unemployment along the west coast. The old migrant workers going down to Salinas to harvest the crops (right now it is asparagus) are maligned in the press and there is much talk of bums and drunks and disorder—all to lead up to the hiring of Mexican braceros, and continuing the law which permits the entry of these many thousands into the area for harvest.

Fr. Simon chaired my meeting, and one old lady of ninety who probably heard little of what I said, informed me afterward that she had heard me ten years ago and twenty years ago! Another said how happy it made her to see so many young people at the meeting which was crowded, and with many priests.

The next night there was another very good and crowded meeting at Blackfriars—so crowded indeed that many could not get in. Our old friend and fellow worker Leonard Austen was there and we made a date for lunch so he could catch up on all the news of New York where he had worked for us.

Wednesday, March 16.

To Gordon Koller's for supper, and for a meeting afterward. Gordon grows in energy and spirit, it seems to me and he and his wife and children have been close to us for many years. The oldest son is now going to St. Mary's and many of his friends were at the meeting, including Governor Brown's son; who is taking ten copies of the paper each month to give to his friends.

Thursday, March 17.

Up at six to go to Mass at Fr. Vodusek's church and breakfast with him afterward. Another priest with him, ninety years old, was sitting in his bedroom living room, calmly reading Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's **Phenomenon of Man** with great enjoyment. He had painted on the walls of his room pictures of his native village in Yugoslavia. . . Peter Gaffney drove me over to Berkeley to the studio of KPFA where Fr. Boyle (the best interviewer I have yet encountered) and I had a conversation which will be broadcast later. Then to a meeting at the University of Berkeley at Stiles Hall, which was crowded with two separate groups, political and pacifist.

Earlier in the day Harry Bridges had spoken to the school in the auditorium and one of the students commented to me that they had found him naively idealistic! Then to my nephew's for supper and afterwards a group of us went to visit Brother Antoninus who used to run the House of Hospitality in Oakland before he became a Brother and the talk was of self hypnosis, sanctity, beats and fame and his printing jobs which occupied him five hours a day.

Friday, March 18.

This morning I listened to a broadcast of the Mayor, George Christopher, a Greek Orthodox by religion and so perhaps closer to the Russian thought than we, and he spoke of his recent visit to the Soviet Union. He told of a collective farm which had 2,500 workers (the same acreage in the U.S., he commented, would have been worked by about 25 men). Again I could not help but think of the farm labor situation in the U.S. and the unemployment, seasonal and also due to age or crippling sicknesses.

The story which I gathered together about California farm labor in my later visits to Stockton, and Tracy will be in a later issue of the Catholic Worker.

Visited the City Lights Bookshop which is in the heart of North Beach (there is no Beach and the section corresponds to New York's Greenwich Village). It is one of the best book shops I have ever seen and covers all paper backs as well as hard covers. Ammon speaks there when he is in the area. Visited also Pierre de Lattre, a young Congregationalist minister who runs a center somewhat similar to **the Catholic Worker** headquarters in New York, called Bread and Wine. There is no breadline and his appeal is rather to the young intellectuals of the area—I do not like to call them all beatniks—and they themselves prefer “beat” or even existentialist! The center, a store which he occupies (his family of wife and young children live upstairs) has been sold and he is looking for other quarters in the same area.

Had a farewell dinner with Josephine Gardner who is indeed a kindred spirit and delightful to be with. She it was who did most to make my visit to San Francisco easy and pleasant and I advise anyone going there to get in touch with her at the Serra Library next to St. Boniface Church. She tells stories on television for children, she is a designer of clothes for the crippled (she herself is confined in a wheel chair) and she is a woman of family and deep wisdom.

Here I must leave the account though I have only reached March 19th, St. Joseph's day, when I left San Francisco. I will finish up the trip in the June issue of **The Catholic Worker** which will also, most probably, tell of this year's jail experiences, if it so be that we are sentenced again for civil disobedience and are released by then.

I want to call attention before I close to the book **THE SPIRIT'S PILGRIMAGE** by Madeleine Slade, published by Coward McCann, which has a great deal to say about “decentralized rural economy, the other and more fundamental aspect of non-violence.” Miss Slade was the MIRA to whom Gandhi addressed many interesting letters, and whose companion and fellow worker she was for the last twenty years or so of his life. She did a tremendous amount of work in India furthering the Gandhian ideal of village community and of course shared many of the jail experiences. She writes “preparatory training for non-violence is just as necessary as military training” and “Whatever defensive measure they used, there should be 100% bravery. Fearlessness was the first attribute to all endeavor.” At Gandhi's death she wrote “My mind went back to the crucifix in the Vatican at Rome. Yes, he knew that was the gateway and the thing he was seeking. In knowledge, humility and love he had to be ready to give all.”