

# She Walks this World Alone—

Story and Pictures by Richard Polese

She walks alone the breadth and width of America carrying a simple message of peace—peace between men and peace with oneself. She carries with her all she actually owns, she does not accept cash donations and seldom accepts a ride. She will talk anywhere, anytime with anyone who is seriously interested in her pilgrimage. She has been walking and talking in this fashion for more than 13 years.

Last week Peace Pilgrim visited Santa Fe and spoke at a public gathering at La Posada, the College of Santa Fe and St. John's College.

Peace Pilgrim is the only name she now carries. And although her hair is now silver and her face appears scored with the miles of her walk, she speaks brightly, with drama and intelligence and conviction. Her physical fitness is astonishing. She wears a navy blue tunic, with "Peace Pilgrim" lettered on the front, and "25,000 Miles for Peace" on the back (even though she passed the 25,000 mile goal years ago and has since stopped counting the miles).

Why does she call it a pilgrimage? "A pilgrimage involves example and prayer. It can't be called a crusade, which uses at least psychological force." What results does she hope for? "My pilgrimage may at least make people think—to have them question themselves. I leave the results in God's hands."

In her public presentation she talks of the things which are preventing peace; of how a person gains peace within himself, and of her pilgrimage.

Why is there war? "The real problem is immaturity. With real maturity war would be impossible. It would never be considered as a solution of problems between men."



*INFORMAL CONVERSATION* followed Peace Pilgrim's talk at St. John's College. Surrounded by students at dining hall table, she responded to their questions on the problems of war and peace and her pilgrimage.

# But She Walks with the Saints

Finding peace within oneself, Peace Pilgrim says, involves a change in attitude toward life. "It meant living all the good things I believed. It took the living quite a while to catch up with the believing, but it did.

"Simplify your life. There is great freedom in simplicity—more possessions than you actually need burden you...our possessions possess us when we keep them after they are no longer of use to us."

"Purify your thoughts and desires and motives. Hate injures the hater, not the hated. Have a true oneness of desire—just to want to do God's will for you."

"Whether you call it good religious teaching, or sound psychological practices, these things are not new—they are universally valid."

Peace and getting along with others can be made a simple task. "The key is approaching with love and openness, rather than hatred and mistrust—that's what I mean by maturity." Immature people, she says, have negative mind sets, such as a military mind set which sees only military answers.

A religious person, yet not an orthodox Christian, Peace Pilgrim uses a "receptive silence" approach to prayer.

"I'm an optimist because I believe that the laws of the universe work for good—if we obey them. But the choice is ours..." Evidence of her optimism is her expectation that there will be disarmament in her own lifetime.

Peace Pilgrim related that



*A LIVELY and colorful speaker, Peace Pilgrim presents her appeal for a peaceful world, and her guide for finding peace within oneself. She is dressed in the lettered tunic she wears as she hikes across the country—a walk which has continued for more than 13 years. Her gray hair contrasts with her remarkable physical vitality. She is shown as she spoke at St. John's College in Santa Fe last week.*