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Peace Pilgrim Wanders U.S.

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She has silver-white hair piled on top of her head, wears navy blue slacks and tunic, and may be seen walking in front of your local shopping center or along the highway.

She is "Peace Pilgrim" and has been walking for peace for almost 25 years now. As she puts it, "I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until I am given shelter and fasting until I am given food." She avoids talking about her personal life, bent on concentrating on her life since she became a pilgrim.

Peace Pilgrim says she doesn't force her views on anyone. She says she never goes anywhere to speak, be it church, school or civic group, unless she is invited. Now on her sixth crossing of the U.S. and Canada, she still walks spreading the word of God, depending completely on the good will and generosity of others. (She is presently staying with Mrs. Julia B. Aiken in Silver Spring.) She speaks to individuals along the way, to groups in cities and through the media, saying that we are in a crisis period in human history, and that we must choose between a nuclear war of annihilation and a golden age of peace.

NOW IN her "retirement years," Peace Pilgrim says she began preparation for her pilgrimage 40 years ago when she was a young girl. Her religion is an "inner peace" she acquired at 16 years of age when she sought God and received her answer. She now walks, she says, not on "the energy of youth," but on this inner strength. She has never been affiliat-

ed with any religious denomination and was not brought up by her parents to go to church. She was reared according to the golden rule in grammar school and says that is the basis of her philosophy and a strong influence on her life. She claims that her non-affiliation with any group makes it easier for her to speak to everyone, regardless of a person's religion, philosophy or culture.

When Peace Pilgrim decided to start her pilgrimage, she says she was already silver-haired and her friends tried to talk her into a retirement home. But she had other ideas. It took her five years to give away her worldly possessions, during which time she worked with senior citizens and helped people with their problems. Ever since, she has wandered the U.S. and Canada without income of her own, trying to inspire others to pray and work with her for peace.

ASKED IF she has ever had any

trouble or harassment from the people she talks with, she claims that she can't remember one instance when anyone yelled or said a bad word to her. "The only time someone threw something at me, she said, "was when a man threw a handful of paper money at me, shouting, 'this is for the church.' So, the next day I gave the money to the church where I was speaking." Peace Pilgrim says she is often invited to colleges and schools by their religious and philosophy departments, and is well-received by the students. "They ask very searching questions," she says.

Searching questions are exactly what Peace Pilgrim wants. She says that her job as a pilgrim is to "rouse and make people think." On looking back, she claims that one of the roughest periods of her pilgrimage was after the Korean War when fear and apathy prevailed in America. It was a period during which she found it very difficult to arouse and interest people in her cause.

PEACE PILGRIM would like to see a Peace Department established in the federal government. As she sees it, such a department would have three functions: to research peaceful ways of resolving conflicts, to deal with the international problem of disarmament and the arms race, and to be an example to the world. She thinks all nations would also benefit from a universal language which would further world peace by enabling people to communicate on the same level. According to Peace Pilgrim's philosophy, the only way to fight hatred is with love. "Love disarms hatred," she says.

Having spent the last year on the east coast, speaking, answering mail and walking, Peace Pilgrim's next public meeting will be held this Sunday, May 15, at Christ Congregational Church, 9525 Colesville Rd., Silver Spring, at 10 a.m. From the Washington, D.C. area she will proceed northward, and onward, "... until mankind has learned the way of peace..."