

Letter written to her sister and family after the start of her pilgrimage in January 1953

(Typed from its original longhand by Friends of Peace Pilgrim)

San Diego, Calif.
Thurs., Jan. 22, 1953

Dear Helene and all my folks back home:

When I last wrote you I was Mildred Ryder. Now I am Peace Pilgrim. What happened to me in Los Angeles and Hollywood was almost miraculous. All channels of communication were opened to me and my little peace message.

I spent hours being interviewed by newspaper reporters and being photographed by newspaper photographers. My story (even my picture) went out over Associated Press, United Press, International News Service. Besides doing two live television programs I spent hours recording for radio, television, newsreels, and it went out over national hook-ups of radio and television. Newspapers all along the line from Los Angeles to San Diego were interested. What happened here in San Diego I told about in Jeanie's letter.

I am sorry that the wire services attempted to get - and in some cases did get - personal information about me. I understand that the F.B.I. investigated me, too. Should any more reporters try to get personal information please tell them that I am not interested in personal notoriety but only in publicity for my peace message, and that under the circumstances you do not feel you should give personal information about me. I don't think any more reporters will bother you. I seem to be accepted now as Peace Pilgrim.

I received everything you sent me care of General Delivery, San Diego. Thank you, Helene, and thanks also for letting me know the reactions of the "girls".

Yes, I did start at the big New Year's Day parade in the Los Angeles section. My costume was not expensive enough to walk in the parade, but I walked just ahead of the parade, distributing my messages and talking with people, and a lot of people saw me.

Grandma, I intended sending you a card on your birthday, but I'm afraid in all the rush it remained just an intention. However, it is not too late to wish for you this year and always abundant health, abiding happiness, and great inner peace.

Please forward the first class mail which you have on hand to me care of General Delivery, El Centro, California. The other mail, which takes much longer, should be forwarded to me care of General Delivery, Yuma, Arizona. You will receive this Saturday, and the above should be mailed Saturday, or Monday at the latest. After that continue sending first class mail care of General Delivery, Yuma, Arizona, and hold second class mail.

The "lethargy" class can now begin to do something which will not affect their lethargy materially. They can sign my petitions — perhaps even circulate them. Someone in San Diego very kindly made them up for me. They (and my message) were approved by the head of the San Diego Council of Churches, and have been and are being widely circulated by the churches here and also by other groups. People in other places made them up themselves and are circulating them. I enclose copies. I also enclose various other things.

As far as my affiliation with peace organizations is concerned, I have now no affiliation whatsoever, but I have worked with the American Friends Service Committee, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Best of everything to all of you. Any letters I send are also for the folks in Atlantic City.

Your roving "Peace Pilgrim"