

OUR MISSION



At Mary's House, we strive to live out our Catholic faith and love our neighbor through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. We embrace simple living, self-sustenance, relying on God's providence, and restoring the dignity of every human being. We look to our Blessed Mother as an example of love in action, and draw from the Catholic Worker movement started by Dorothy Day in the 1930's.

We are here to share God's grace, mercy, forgiveness and love, in stark opposition to the values of secular society. We embrace a simple way of life, working with farm animals, growing our own food, and doing life-giving work on the land. We serve the community in the Appalachian region, in Manchester, Kentucky.

OUR VISION

MARY'S HOUSE TURNS ONE

By Henny Vallee



As we celebrate the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 8th, we also celebrate the one-year birthday of Mary's House with much to reflect on, much to be thankful for, and much more to learn.

Never in my life did I imagine owning over 70 animals at any given time, although the number fluctuates more than I'm comfortable admitting. A common saying in this part of the country is that if you have livestock, you will certainly have dead stock. The losses this year have been painful, and I hope this part of farming gets easier over time. We unexpectedly welcomed

a litter of kitties because we weren't able to have our barn cats fixed in time. After just enough time for my daughter to imprint on the kitties, we lost one in an unfortunate accident.

While a difficult loss, this certainly wasn't our biggest loss. That would have to go to our cow Dixie and her calf Chixie, weighing at about 2000 lbs total, which we lost in the woods behind our farm. Despite our repeated efforts to fix the barbed wire fence, Dixie and Chixie escaped on several occasions, finally staying away for almost a full week when they found that the grass was greener on the other side. We had given up hope of getting them back when a neighbor showed up saying that the cows had been grazing just over the hill from us. We worked out a deal with a local cattle farmer to trade our two cows for a slaughter-worthy heifer. All we had to do was pick up and drop off at the butcher. And just like that, we were out of the cattle business.



Thank God! Trying to convince a 1500-lb animal to stay home is harder than you might imagine.

Another difficulty has been protecting our chickens and guinea hens from the livestock guardian dogs we adopted earlier this year. But all the blame can't be put on the puppies; ignorant to the propensity for chickens to overheat, Patrick killed about a dozen chickens transporting them home in Home Depot bins on a hot day, a decision that still haunts him today.

Thankfully, Patrick's mostly responsible for building, which has finally showed some progress after a long winter and a super wet rainy season. The community kitchen, which will have a guest



room, as well as a laundry room, is coming together much quicker than we anticipated. The walls, roof, windows and doors are up and weatherproofing is in progress. We are continually amazed at how fast Patrick builds! The deck around the bonfire has now connected the woodworking shed to the tiny cabin. To be able to walk from one building to the next with no shoes on is quite a magnificent bonus. We also have added a fun playground project for the kids, which for now is called "The Park" by our little one.

Gardening has unfortunately taken a backseat this year, since

neither of us have the time nor the energy to tend to a garden. We planted several rows of cold weather crops, but they soon were overtaken by the wild weeds of Kentucky, especially with all the rain early this spring. However, those "wild weeds" turned out to be gifts from God, as they have medicinal benefits that we could use in herbal salves and tea. We've since learned so much more about purple dead nettle, wild violets, white and red clovers, plantain leaves and mullein. Those herbal salves are now available for purchase at our local Clay County Historical Society, and have also been offered as part of our monthly contributor gifts.

The land is also revealing black walnut crops that need to



be harvested, sugar and red maples that need to be tapped, and hundreds of downed logs that need to be milled. We are now seeing the potential for cultivating mushrooms, keeping bees, and tending larger flocks of goats. God's blessings are everywhere you look on the land!

Not all the blessings we've experienced this year came from the land. This summer we've had a few friends and visitors. Our friends Phil and Lucia flew from Las Vegas to spend Memorial Day weekend with us, relaxing in nature, enjoying food from our farm and hanging around the bonfire. They left feeling inspired to have retreats on our land. Then in June, our friends

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Your support has allowed our little family to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Christ. Please consider contributing to our current community needs.



Scan the code to donate, or to send by check, please make it payable to **Henny Vallee** and mail to **P.O. Box 51, Goose Rock, KY 40944.**

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS!

- Lowe's and/or Home Depot gift cards to finish the community kitchen and hospice house of hospitality
- Walmart and/or Tractor Supply gift cards
- Long/short-term community members and volunteers
- Tractor
- Funds for animal feed and vet visits
- Wood-burning stove
- Commercial kitchen sink





Carlos and Tanya drove their family in an RV cross country to experience the farm life. We all had such fun times, swimming in the creek, riding in the lawnmower, and watching “The SandLot” on the outdoor movie screen. In July, we hosted a farm day for our homeschool co-op group, where we had a BBQ cookout, followed by a fun day feeding the goats, riding in the side by side, and playing in the creek.

With the coming year, we expect more visitors, we expect farming to take off, and we’re expecting several baby goats. Choosing to live this lifestyle certainly has not been easy and sure has its challenges, but we wouldn’t have done it any other way. We get to experience it alongside our children, learning how to walk in faith together and seeing each other grow along the way. Our oldest Hannah is now involved in being a lector, and have sung with me for Mass. Our older son Gabe is training to be an altar server. Our other son Caleb is learning to secure the framing of our new kitchen building, while our middle daughter Sara whips up her homemade smoothies during hot working days. Even our youngest Faith is learning to serve by pouring ice cold drink for us after a long day of working. We are surely blessed and we pray for all those who supported us and continue to be there for us. We look forward to sharing more in the future. Peace be with you.



PRAY WITH US

- The sick among our family and friends, and for our ability to serve the least among us through caring for the infirmed and imprisoned
- Our beloved departed
- Dwight & Leia Smith (OCCW)
- Our local parishes and parishioners from St. Ann and St. William
- Search for Christ family
- Our kids and their homeschool & faith journey
- Our mental and physical health



LET US PRAY FOR YOU

One of the blessings of the homesteading lifestyle we’ve adopted is that it allows for plenty of prayer time.

We all know that Jesus hears the prayers of the young first. Let us and our children pray for you and yours. Send us your prayer request and we will pray for you during our nightly prayers.

Email us at mammahenn@gmail.com.

**“THE BEST THINGS
TO DO WITH
THE BEST THINGS
IN LIFE IS TO
GIVE THEM AWAY.”**

DOROTHY DAY

LET'S HEAR IT FROM THE KIDS

HANNAH, 16

Since moving out to Kentucky, we've found so many different ways to give back to the community. We've learned so much about our land and all the natural resources on it. We've harvested some plants and flowers to make herbal tea, salves and balms! We're sending these handmade gifts to monthly contributors every other month to show our gratitude. I



hope to add in some of my crochet plushies to the subscription packages soon. The local Clay County Historical Society has bought a bunch of



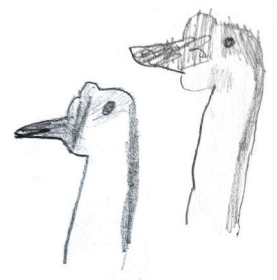
my mom's salves to sell there, and they've started selling my crochet cardinals. I'm so excited to share the things we've made with our community. Every Sunday when we go to Mass, we always try to

bring something to share with or give to our Catholic family. Sometimes I bake for the church breakfast after Mass. I love to bake and it makes me so happy to share it with everyone else. We also love to bring fresh eggs from our chickens to give away to our church family. We hope to someday sell our eggs to the local community so they can get a taste of this life we live. Sharing this homesteading life with others through the gifts we make is such a blessing. This community has helped and supported us so much. We are forever grateful. I pray that we can give just as much love and support as everyone has given us. I hope we get more opportunities to give back to the community and help those in need soon.



SARA, 9

I never would have thought that we would have more than 20 animals, but I ended up loving all of them. I love how Wayne, our little black kitty is so energetic, and I love watching him climb up trees. I love our dog Raena and how loving she is. I also like how our goat Latte follows us around like a dog and how she twirls as she jumps off the deck. I really love painting and have been painting some of our animals like Milo, Raven, Chloe, Gingy, Raena and Rebel. That's just one of the ways I contribute to the Farm.



Animal sketches by Sara V.

GABE, 14



My dad always says that I'm getting so strong but I always shrug it off. Only when I think about it do I realize how much I've changed since we moved to Kentucky. Every day on the farm there is plenty of work to be done. For the last year of living here, we've finished and are working on so many projects on the land, like the playground, a pasture

outside of the barn for our animals, a path of decking between every building and a second trail from the first to the second landing. We've also been building the community kitchen and it's almost finished, which is a huge milestone. With so much to be done on the farm it's sure to change you one way or another, especially after living most of your life in the suburbs with not much to do. I remember when my dad bought my brother and I a set of weights for lifting before we moved. We lifted them everyday and I struggled to curl the 15-pound weight. I wonder how much I can lift now.



CALEB, 12

This summer looks a lot different than the last one. Last year all seven of us lived in a tent, used generators for electricity, and had to poop in a bag and wash our dishes in the river. Now we have electricity in our cabin, plumbing for a toilet, hot showers and sink to do dishes. We've acquired many tools to help with the farm like the side by side, the zero turn mower and the bush hog. I've learned how to operate the zero turn mower and the side by side pretty well, but yet to learn how to use the bush hog. We've been working on the foundation for the kitchen for about a year and our most recent project is the playground that has a trampoline, 2 swing sets, seesaw and monkey bars that we are still working on. We've had friends visit and stay for a few nights on our land. They enjoyed our creek, shooting range, the animals and hanging out around the bonfire. This past year has been packed and the future has a lot more to come and I'm here for it.





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