

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 AND MARTHA

By Patrick Vallee



Mary and Martha have been a recurring theme on the farm this summer. This dichotomous relationship has also come up in our parish conversations, and on a recent road trip to learn about caring for local resources. God, through several gentle reminders, has been asking me to consider these saintly women in light of my new life on the farm and in this movement. It does not take much consideration to come to terms with the idea that I have always been a Martha. As a Catholic Worker, no one ever questioned my tendency to be a Martha; in fact, as

the name suggests, being a worker is kind of necessary when one embraces this communal lifestyle. Having a new family staying on the land, in addition to the families we care for at the campground and a few of the local disenfranchised poor, requires me to be a Martha. Taking time to develop the Mary in me seems like a dangerous luxury. At our busiest this summer, we had over 30 people on the land, with over half staying at the farm with us. I can't remember ever feeling the weight of responsibility so heavily. I felt that everything had to be perfect, that I had to create a place worthy of God to come and

meet our guests.

One afternoon, while our seminarians were visiting, The Martha and Mary in me duked it out. As Mary's House (and, yes, the irony of our name just smacked me in the face), prepared to celebrate Mass with our local community for the first time (the most obvious "Mary" moment ever), I was freaking out in my bedroom because I'd scratched one of the vehicles in the driveway while transporting guests to the house. The Mass, our first Mass on the Catholic Worker farm, was a blur to me; Martha had won the first round.



After Mass, I promptly confessed to the owner of the vehicle I'd scratched. He didn't even blink. He didn't care about the vehicle. He was clearly enjoying the better part. He was a "Mary." As it turns out, Mary didn't come to duke it out; She came to embrace Martha and to offer comfort, rest, and forgiveness. Mary's stillness and quiet contemplation allows her to internalize God's word. She understands the work is for God and is sanctified by God. She understands that the sanctification of the work makes it holy in God's sight, and whatever the outcome, God will not waste it. He will glorify it, make it holy, and use it to bless us. Understanding this is what makes it "the better part." Martha's work is necessary, and her sainthood bears this out, but placing the work in the context of our God and asking him to use it to His glory will always be the better part.

During our visit with the seminarians, our family was introduced to a new pace of life and prayer. We began praying the



"LOVE IN ACTION IS A HARSH AND DREADFUL THING."

DOROTHY DAY

As we approach winter, my heart grows heavy. Our needs this year are quickly outpacing our financial ability. Last winter proved too much for many of those we care for. Two families packed up and moved. The grandma from another family had to be taken out of the campground because of hypothermia; she eventually lost a toe and that family ultimately decided to move as well. Finally, an elderly man who walked 14 miles a day for gas and propane was hit by an ATV and died. A propane tank only costs \$29 to fill up; a 5 gallon gas can costs even less. Blankets and cold weather gear can get quite expensive, and we weren't able to outfit everyone. While many of those families have left, we have adopted new ones just down the road from us. My heart can't take another winter of loss. PLEASE consider contributing just a little to our ministry. Jesus is everywhere. He is in everyone. He needs us, and I am broken a little more every time I have to drive by him on the road to Jericho and offer nothing but a wave and smile.



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!



Liturgy of the Hours. Our day was, and continues to be, punctuated by morning, daytime, evening, and nightly prayers. These prayers have begun the process of centering my life on God and His will for me. I don't know how I've gotten along for so long without recognizing the simple truth of our need to participate in the better part more often than we do, but this Summer I am finally realizing that we must pursue God in every place we find Him and in every person who crosses our path. To pursue God is necessary; it is the Martha in each of us. To understand God is also necessary; it is the Mary in each of us. To be fully awake and in God's presence demands we are open to both Martha and Mary. As it turns out, the story of Martha and Mary is not dichotomous; rather, it is an example of the fullness of our faith, and it is in line with God's other great seemingly dichotomous truths: The story of Cain and Abel, the idea of the last shall be first, the wise and foolish builders, the sowing of seeds in fertile and non-fertile ground, and the seeming contradictions in the Beatitudes.

Thank You, God, for the deep well from which we draw our faith, and thank You for saving the unworthy like me.

TURNING 17

I just turned 17 this month which officially marks our 2nd year of being on the land. It's so crazy to me how much things have grown and changed over the years. Looking back, my life has changed so much. Back in



Colorado I would've never dreamed my life would look like this. Some people might look at our lifestyle and think that we have given up so much to be here, and we have! We gave up our big house, our space, our old friends in school, but we've also gained so much throughout this journey.

It's hard to imagine what my life would look like if we had never moved out here. I can only imagine I'd be going to school, maybe going to parties, going shopping with friends, having a job and my drivers license. It's weird to think about all the different paths we could've chosen. Even though I've given up having a normal high school life, I wouldn't choose another path if I could. Moving here onto our land, starting a Catholic Worker, meeting all these amazing people, I wouldn't be the same person I am today without it.

The knowledge I've gained here, I never would've learned with my old lifestyle. I feel more connected with my family and the community and most of all, with God. His works are more prominent



in my everyday life as I notice how blessed we are to always have our needs fulfilled and our cups never empty. God always takes care of us and keeps us afloat. I'm still not sure what our future looks like and where God will take us, but I do know

that my faith is stronger than it ever has been, and God will always be looking out for us, making sure that we're okay. - Hannah, 17

THE VISITORS GOD GAVE US

When we started Mary's House, I wasn't expecting many people to visit, just a couple of family members and that's all, but I was very wrong. Last year, besides the few family and friends who visited, Riley, a 17-year-old teenage boy and his grandmother Mary, stayed at Mary's House, as a part of his senior project visiting Catholic Workers around the country.

This year there have been people who come regularly to use our facility and services, such as showers, laundry, clothing and food. This summer, we had a few friends visiting. Dad's former coworker, Mark, and his wife Letty, came to celebrate the 4th of July with us. Dad's friend, Sean, came from Colorado to deliver two kittens. Hannah's friend, Quinn, from Nebraska stayed with us for two weeks.



The last group we hosted were six seminarians and a priest and they stayed for a week. I enjoyed talking about movies and playing charades with them. It's cool to see the fun side of seminarians and priests. It's also crazy to see that we have community members on our land. Karen, Patrick, little Patrick and Evelyn have been living on our land for two months now, and it's nice to have their company and help. With the extra sets of hands, feeding the animals and mowing go by much faster now.



When we moved out here I thought we would be separated from everyone else, but it's nice to know that God still blesses us with people across the country. - Caleb, 13

WELCOMING FATHERS IN OUR HOME

By Henny Vallee

I'm used to seeing our priests up front at the altar on Sundays, but when they walk through our front door to commune with us, pray with us, and break bread with us, it is quite life-changing.

The first time our family hosted a priest in our home was in Colorado. There were four young volunteers visiting from Totus Tuus, a Catholic summer youth program, and we invited them along with our priest to dinner at our place.

Another time we had a priest over was under a much different circumstance. My dad was in hospice care at our home and needed the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. So we called Father Jim Baron to come over and he sat with my dad at his bedside. It was a very intimate and special moment in my life.



In July this year, we received an email from Father John Sollee from St. Vincent De Paul Regional Seminary in Florida inquiring about a possible visit to Mary's House with 9 seminarians in August. My heart just about skipped a beat as we emailed him back. Before we knew it, flights were booked and plans laid out. It wouldn't be long until we have another Father walking through our front door.



The weeks before their arrival were busy and a hectic blur of drywalling, painting, mowing and a lot of rearranging. Every night ended with exhaustion and another long list of to-dos to tackle the next day. Father John would give us quick updates on the planning side through phone calls and texts, and every time he mentioned a quick update that there would be one fewer seminarian coming, I'd let out a sigh of relief, because it meant one fewer person to house and feed in our limited space. I do believe that God gives us what we can handle and I suppose our number lands at about 6 or 7. The latest headcount was a priest and 6 seminarians.

As the day got closer, we had no choice but to get better at surrendering to God and come as we were. As much as my perfectionist and overachieving mind wanted to accomplish and provide, the reality was that we are no more than that poor widow with two small copper coins, or the little boy with two fish and five loaves. But that was enough.

We welcomed the group of young men into Mary's House, which at this point was made up of an almost-finished cabin with a functioning bathroom (the only one on the farm), a work-in-progress community kitchen (with a working laundry room, pantry, bedroom and a future bathroom), and another shed-turned-cabin insulated with partly drywalled walls. With these three buildings, we were able to house 5 seminarians and our family of 7 (Praise be to God). Father John and the last seminarian were hosted at the guest house at St. Ann Mission parish. My daily prayer



during the week leading to their visit was, “Dear Lord, help me feed the 5,000 at our table.” By the grace of God, we did just that.

The week with Father John and the seminarians was blessed with so many graces and beautiful shared experiences. These young men were kind, generous, prayerful, fun-loving, passionate, humble, patient, helpful and everything that I’d imagine Jesus would be. These Fathers-to-be were half my age with twice my wisdom. This gave me hope in the future of our Church, and I’m glad our children were able to see that a priest is more than just that guy standing at the altar on Sundays. They’re men of God who enjoy a good game of charade, skipping rocks at the creek, baking cornbread, and appreciate a *Descendants* movie. Our family is once again in a state of change because of their presence in our lives. We are starting to adopt their daily prayers of the Liturgy of the Hours, we are praying for vocations and for more young people to consider the religious life or priesthood, and Mary’s House has a renewed charge to step out into the community and bring the love of God to His forgotten people.



THE GIFT OF THE CREEK

Having the creek is amazing! The creek has plenty of uses like washing dishes, swimming, and a lot more!



When we moved to our land for the very first time, we had no running water, but luckily the creek had our backs! Everyday, my mom, Hannah, and I would go down to the creek to wash our dishes. When the weather got colder, the water was freezing.

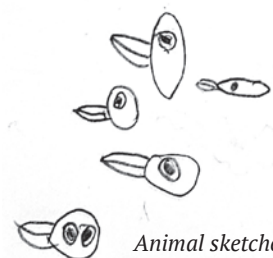
Thankfully, we got running water in our cabin last November. We were finally able to take showers inside and in hot water! Now, thanks to the help from the seminarians, we also have nice, warm water in the sink in the community kitchen.

When it gets hot, I love swimming in the creek! All throughout summer I’ve been swimming almost every other day. And it helps build relationships, like how Evelyn

taught me how to swim, and how Gabe and Caleb taught me how to float on my back! It makes me appreciate everybody around me.



There are other benefits too, like watching the geese, ducks, and ducklings swim in the creek, listening to the soothing sounds of the running water, and providing water for the animals! - Sara, 10



Animal sketches
by Sara V.

THE STORIES OF THE LOCALS

After spending two years in Manchester, I am starting to learn a lot about this town's history and the local people. Manchester is in a beautiful area with much to learn about it. Last fall, I started working for Jimmie, a local legend, farmer, and beekeeper my family and I met at church. I learn something new from Jimmie every time I see him.



A car ride to Jimmie's farm is never a boring time. Once, Jimmie pointed out a man mowing his lawn, and told me that the man was a Hatfield. He then started telling me about the Hatfield - McCoy feud which took place between the years 1863 and 1891. He told me that these two families had serious bad blood with each other. The dispute between the two families had started with political problems but was seriously escalated when Randolph McCoy accused his neighbor, Floyd Hatfield of stealing a hog. The conflict was taken to court where witness Bill

Staton, a relative to the Hatfields, sided with the Hatfields. This angered the McCoys, causing them to kill Bill Staton and eventually starting an all-out war between families for decades.

When my dad and I see a dead animal on the road, my dad's reaction is somewhere along the lines of "Oh, look at that! Ew, that's nasty!" Jimmie's reaction to the same animal is, "Oh, you know what that is? It's a skunk. There are two types of skunks in Kentucky..." I have acquired quite a bit of knowledge about the area and its history now, thanks to locals like Jimmie. I get many opportunities to learn and experience new things. This life in Manchester is so much more interesting and eventful than the one I had before moving here.

People like Jimmie are an important piece of the community. Jimmie takes care of the land and teaches others about it. He shares the history of the town with everyone he meets and connects them by doing so. Jimmie is an anchor in our community, and we are very fortunate to have him. - Gabe, 15



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
- An increase in vocations in the Diocese of Lexington
- Fr. John Sollee & the seminarians from St. Vincent De Paul Regional Seminary
- Search for Christ family
- Our community members
- Our kids and their homeschool & faith journey
- The animals on our farm

Let us and our children pray for you. Send us your prayer request to mammahenn@gmail.com and we will pray for you during our nightly prayers.



Mary's House in Manchester
www.maryshouseinmanchestercw.com

