

On Pilgrimage - April 1946

Dorothy Day

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Summary: Describes the surroundings at Maryfarm in Easton, PA: the animals, including the goat genealogy, the workers and the types of services they render, a welcome change in schedule and the new St. Joseph outdoor shrine. Boasts of the visitors, readers of the Catholic Worker, who come to discuss by the hundreds. (DDLW #423).

The 29th of March, and a perfect Spring day here at Maryfarm. A blue haze hangs over the valley below me, the cherry and pear trees below the little cabin where I write are about to burst into bloom. Here on the porch, two leaping baby goats are a great distraction. They are one week old today and, a buck and a doe, the young of Susie, born last year on April 3, the very day my little granddaughter was born. Their mother is giving two quarts of milk a day, which nourishes the granddaughter and partly nourishes the orphan children, three of them, of Susie's mother Chloe, who gave birth to the kids day before yesterday and died the day after. I say partly nourishes, because a young goat drinks a quart and a half of milk a day, and we supplement Susie's milk with canned milk for the orphans. Everyone asks for news of the farm, as a farm, and I always think of the animals, because although we call this place Maryfarm, we are not doing a great deal of farming.

Ever since seeing William Cobbett's *American Gardener* (a very rare book which deserves reprinting and is on par with his *Cottage Economy*), I have thought how necessary it is for families who wish to settle on the land to learn gardening and small husbandry and some craft. We should be thinking in terms of village economy instead of farm economy. There is such a need for shoemakers, carpenters, stone masons, gardeners, etc. It is harder to get shelter these days than it is to get food.

Right now we have on Maryfarm an assortment of animals. There are three families on the farm and each has goats and chickens. In addition, my daughter has a cow and a sheep. The retreat house has two buck kids to raise for food; two sheep to shear for wool, and two heifers to raise for milk cows; and, aside from the baby goats, my son-in-law takes care of these animals. Joe Cotter, who has been doing all the electrical work around the place, takes care of rabbits, and John Filliger, who has come back to help us after an absence for the duration, takes care of the one horse, Dolly, who is blind and for whom we paid \$40.

Together with Dolly and a neighbor's horse, John has spread manure, cleared the fields of rocks, and plowed a garden patch and two little fields for potatoes. As usual, we plan to concentrate on roots, trying to get potatoes, turnips, cabbage, carrots, beets and onions, all of which can be stored without canning. Angela Costanza, one of the staff of the retreat house, aims to put up tomato paste in quantities this year. But what fruit we will get will go on the table during the season for it. Last year the late frosts and the terrible storms of midsummer, which washed out roads and shredded the cabbage in the fields and destroyed trees, not only destroyed our wheat fields, but also our berries, cherries and pears.

(Hans Tunneson, our Norwegian seaman fellow worker, has just finished fencing in a little garden around the cherry trees for the goats, and soon the twins and the triplets will be gamboling there together.)

God has greatly blessed us these last two weeks in sending us Fr. Thomas Benedict Grace to be our chaplain for the month. Fr. Roy is still on an extended tour of the South. Fr. Grace has been a chaplain in the Canadian air corps during the war and does not have to report back to duty for another month. He has been busy, indeed, helping us around the retreat house, and his suggestions and direction have been invaluable. There is now a little shrine to St. Joseph up on the crest of the first hill, on the picnic grounds, only as yet we have no St. Joseph of proper size to put in it. We need a statue about ten inches high and we are hoping to get one of our artists to carve it. Our large statue of St. Joseph, which Tina de Aragon made for us, is too large for the shrine.

What a peaceful and joyful day! We have changed our hour of meditation to quarter of six in the morning, now that Spring is here and it is wonderful to get up in the early light, feed the baby goats and then spend that quiet hour before Mass in our beautiful barn chapel. Now at ten, Irene and Ruth are out in the field putting in onion sets, a long and arduous job. John is cutting up potatoes with the help of Stanley's brother, Walter; Stanley is running off cards on his press; Hans is working at fencing, Joe at electrical work in the big room in the attic which now has two immense dormer windows in it; Duncan is making dinner, and Father and Joe Connell are downtown shopping and seeing about repairs for the car. Father is interested in painting, and the stone house is all newly whitewashed. Our family at the retreat house numbers fifteen, and as I write I see a shirt-sleeved man carrying a suitcase trudging up the road, and this morning a cab drove up with a young, colored girl come to visit us for a while. And so it goes here, people coming and going, many visitors, many readers of the paper coming to discuss ideas. Never was there such a paper as THE CATHOLIC WORKER, I am sure! Do the readers of the *Commonweal*, *America*, *Nation*, *New Republic*, *Common Sense*, come to spend weeks, and by the hundreds, at that? It is not only the farm with its retreat house that receives such constant visitors. There were two hundred and fifty retreatants last year. No, it is also in the city, at the House of Hospitality. Peter Maurin started many people on pilgrimages when he began talking about Houses of Hospitality and

Agronomic Universities fifteen years ago.

Retreat

The Spring retreat will begin Sunday night or Monday, April 22, and continue through the week. Please let us know if you are coming so that we will have a general idea of how many to prepare for.

Maryfarm is two and a half miles south of Easton, Pennsylvania, and can be reached by Lehigh Valley from Pennsylvania station, New York, and by many bus lines. The trip takes an hour and three-quarters and the fare is three dollars and eighty cents a round trip, either by bus or by train. When you reach Easton either take a cab, if you have a dollar, or telephone Easton 9479 and if the 1935 Ford station wagon is working, we will pick you up.