

Love in Action

“It is easier for feeble straw to resist a mighty fire than for the nature of sin to resist the power of love. We must cultivate this love in our souls, that we may take our place with all the saints, for they were all pleasing unto God through their love for their neighbor.”
—Saint New Martyr Elizabeth



Loving & Serving God in Our Neighbor

“Take Heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship”

Acts 27:22 - 44

Paul and some other prisoners of a centurion named Julius were on a ship headed for Rome where Paul was being brought to stand before Cesar. Winter storms were coming, but the centurion had ignored Paul's advise against setting out from a safe harbor. Now their ship was adrift in the treacherous Adriatic Sea. “When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we should be saved was finally given up.” There were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship...The fourteenth day they neared land and planned, “if possible, to run the ship aground on a beach, but struck a reef where the ship's prow stuck fast...and the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves...The centurion commanded that those who could swim should jump over board and get to land and the rest would follow, some on boards and some on parts of the ship... and so it was that they all escaped safely to land.”

When the sea of life gets rough, and the wind and waves threaten to overwhelm us, it is comforting to know that Christ comes to us - walking on the water, saying, **“Fear not, I AM”** (the literal translation of ‘It is I’).

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“Be of Good Cheer!

It is I; do not be afraid.”

Matthew 14:27-33

Immediately after feeding the 5000, Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. They were in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, straining to row against the wind, in the fourth watch of the night, when Jesus came to them, walking on the water.

When the disciples saw him, they cried out for fear, thinking He was a ghost. Jesus told them not to be afraid and Peter answered, *“Lord, if it is You, command me to come to you on the water.”* So He said, **“Come”** and Peter stepped out of the boat and walked towards Him - but when he saw that the wind and waves were boisterous, he was afraid and began to sink and cried out, *“Lord, save me!”* And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him and said to him:

“O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

And when they got into the boat the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying,

“Truly You are the Son of God”.

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God revealed Himself to Moses in the Burning Bush as I AM. Jesus **is** God the Son. He **is** the Master of the wind and the waves. He **is** our Master. When He does not calm the sea or save the ship, it is not because He isn't there or doesn't care. Our ship may be breaking up on a rock, but Christ **is** the Rock. The ship Paul was on sailed when it should have remained safe in port. The centurion chose to ignore Paul's warning. Christ's disciples obeyed their Master who told them to sail across the sea. The Centurion in charge of Paul's ship was not obedient. Still, God is merciful. Because of Paul's faith, no life was lost.

In this year of Our Lord 2009 we find ourselves and our world adrift on a turbulent sea of circumstances increasingly beyond our control. The world economy is collapsing, the population shrinking, institutions, corporations banks, 'certainties' we trusted and took for granted are failing. Jobs are lost. Our houses built on credit-cards are foreclosed. Our ship of state, with the latest instruments on board, is tossed by towering waves under dark clouds without a star in sight. The compass needle and radar spinning, the bow burrowing under, the propeller beating the air, shaking the ship, shaking everything loose. A seaman on the bridge trying to steady the whirling wheel - the officers huddled over charts below, debating the course to sail. We've sprung a leak - is there land nearby - can we safely run aground and swim to shore? How will it end? When will it end? Will we lose everything? Will anything remain?

In the Bible we are forewarned and comforted. In the Old Testament, Haggai 2; 6-8 reads: For this says the Lord Almighty; "Once more I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake the nations, and the choice things of all the nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory," says the Lord Almighty. "The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine".

And in The New Testament, in Hebrews 12:25-29; "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.' ... 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that **the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken**, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire." A footnote to this passage in the Orthodox Study Bible reads: "What can be shaken is that which is created: temporal, impermanent, imperfect."

The Kingdom of God - which Jesus says is within us, cannot be shaken. Glory to God! And Jesus comes to us and says; "Fear not, I AM." Keeping our eyes on Him, and not looking down at the turbulent waves, we have nothing to fear. He provides what we really need. What He takes from us, He knows we need to lose in order to reduce our clutter and focus on what is of true value. Saint Paul reminds us to "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, **in everything give thanks**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1. Thess. 5:16-18.

We thank God that He provides for us in Martha and Mary House. In these days of tightening finances, we trust that He Who fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fish, will adequately meet our needs. We praise Him and pray to be obedient to His will for us. Thank you for your prayers.

♥Wish List♥

New computer for office with Windows XP or newer!

Our office computer was broken several months ago. We have received some used computers but they are too small and old to keep up with our office work.

We also need computers for our daughters to do homework (preferred Desktop with Windows XP or newer)

Staples Gift Cards will also be helpful.

Paper Products / Canned and Dried Food

Dog and Cat Food / Clear Storage Boxes

Please call us for our updated Wish List: 760-741-7050 or marthaandmaryhouse@hotmail.com

Our "Daughters"

Three babies born and at home in loving families. It has been a year since our last newsletter. Since then three babies have been born and placed in open adoption with loving Christian Families, two of them Orthodox. Two babies were born on the same day! We call them our



'twins'; **David** - now at home with his adopted parents in Canada, and **Patrick** - at home with his Orthodox parents in South Carolina, and **Matthias** - at home with his Orthodox parents and two adopted siblings in Georgia. We thank God for them! During adoption proceedings in California, our out-of-state adoptive parents stay at **Comfort Inn** in Escondido, near Martha and Mary House and Palomar Hospital where the babies are born. The General Manager and part owner, Kamil Mansoor, is a Christian from Baghdad. He offers a special rate for our families. We thank God.



Our House News:

Farah Foundation gives \$10,000 to our Scholarship Fund. Our Scholarship Fund was established in 2006 with a \$5,000 grant from the Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch. This year a generous grant of \$10,000 from the Farah Foundation enables us to continue supporting our 'daughters' who pursue their educational goals after giving birth and placing their children in open adoption.

Lina is taking classes at Portland Community College in Oregon. "**Bonnie**" is studying on-line at Phoenix University, hoping to earn her teacher's credentials. **Maria** is entering her fourth year at the CIDH University in Tijuana, Mexico, earning her bachelor's degree and license as teacher/counselor in 2010. We are proud of them and ask your prayers.



Our Vegetable Garden bears a harvest!

Thanks to volunteers **Katherine and Nicholas Steinhoff from St. Luke's Antiochian Church** in Garden Grove, CA, the first seedlings were planted in our vegetable garden in December. The castor bean plants along the fence keep the gophers at bay. Neighbor Gary trapped a persistent one, and put extra chicken-wire fence around the beans and pepper plants to discourage baby rabbits and rats who make it through

the chain link fence! Volunteers Alyse and her teen-age daughters Alexandra, Clarissa and Michaela help weed and plant. We are enjoying Swiss chard, giant cucumbers, zucchini, herbs and ripening tomatoes. Our orange tree produces a nice crop, and the baby fig tree has 13 figs so far! Our raspberry bush has yielded its first berries. The grape vines on the fence are heavy with ripening grapes. Glory to God!

An Abortion Survivors Anonymous group meets at the house. The Twelve Step Post Abortion Grief and Reconciliation Workbook, and long distance counseling via phone or internet, is available to survivors across the country.

In 2008 Housemother traveled to Alaska, for the Summer Institute at Saint John's Cathedral in Eagle River, and **to Norway**, visiting relatives and Orthodox parishes in her hometown **Stavanger, in Bergen and Oslo**. Orthodox friends in Alaska and Norway are faithful supporters of Martha and Mary House. We thank God for them. On our way home, landing in Seattle-Tacoma, our connecting flight to San Diego was cancelled. **Very Reverend Father John and Katherine Pierce** in nearby Puyallup, offered to house us overnight. It was a joy to experience Vespers, Sunday Liturgy and coffee hour with the **Holy Resurrection Parish** - also faithful supporters of Martha and Mary House. Glory be to God.

In December **Fr. Simeon Corona from Saint Gregory of Nyssa Greek Orthodox Church in El Cajon took us to Saint Barbara Monastery for their Feast Day**. Fr. Simeon visits us regularly, for prayer and counseling with our 'daughters' (and Housemother!). In Lent we spoke to the **Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood** in San Diego about our work, and at **St. John Garabed Armenian Church** in San Diego on "Pregnant women in crisis". We also gave an update about Martha and Mary House at **Saint George Serbian Church** in San Diego, and **Saint Gregory of Nyssa** in El Cajon. Both parishes are represented on our Board.



“Coming full Circle” – From “The House of Tomorrow” - to Martha and Mary House...

With the Blessing of His Grace Benjamin, our Diocesan Bishop, Housemother is working on a book on the **Genesis of Martha and Mary House**. It will include the re-print of **“The House of Tomorrow”**, the journal of an unwed mother in a large Maternity Home in the late fifties - where pregnant women went before abortion was legalized, to hide their pregnancy and place their baby for adoption. The journal was first printed by Harper and Row in 1967. **“Coming Full Circle”** will be largely auto-biographical, including her conversion from atheist-humanist-feminist to evangelical Christian, and later via the Episcopal Church to Orthodox Christian. It will tell of her prior termination of pregnancy and healing post-abortion, the founding of **Abortion Survivors Anonymous** and the circumstances leading to the founding of **Martha and Mary House** in 2001.

In giving his blessing, Bishop Benjamin wrote: *“I believe we are wasting a lot of time and effort trying to oppose the laws that permit abortion. Sadly and tragically, that horse has already left the barn. I seriously doubt the laws will ever change. SO we must be there to work on the hearts and souls of those who may seek abortion. The two methods that you have chosen (M&M House and this book) probably have the best chance of bearing fruit. Your ministry is important... working with one soul at the time...+BB”*

The large maternity homes in cities across America emptied out and closed down after 1973 when abortion was legalized. Today the abortion numbers are on the rise again and maternity homes are needed to offer a safe haven and alternative to abortion for pregnant women who need to hide their pregnancy but choose life and an adoptive family for their child.

“Coming Full Circle” is a story of Choice - and Consequences - as all our stories are. It is a story of God’s love and mercy - in all circumstances - including an unplanned pregnancy! As Paul writes to the Romans; *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God.”* If you are pregnant and need a safe place with privacy, contact us. We live like a family - not an institution - **our house is a home** in a quiet neighborhood, with room for Housemother, assistant and four ‘daughters’. We have two dogs and a cat. Check us out on our web-site. God loves you and your unborn child. His plan for you is good!

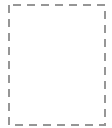
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**Housemother Assistant
Needed.**

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We have been without an assistant since Anna married and moved across the street in 2007. Now a busy wife and mother, she - and her husband - still find time to help in emergencies - he is our web master, she formats and puts together our newsletter! We pray for a House-mother assistant. Metropolitan Jonah - friend of Martha and Mary House, assures us that this is God’s work and God will send the Housemother assistant. We pray and wait for the woman who will answer God’s call to live and serve Him here.

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*“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue,
but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:18)*