

St. Thomas of Canterbury Outreach

Ministries Newsletter

Summer 2023

Back to the Land

A new ministry is growing - literally - at St. Thomas of Canterbury. Welcome to Solidarity Gardens!

Solidarity Gardens is a collaboration of Canterbury House (a ministry of Mary, Mother of God parish) and St. Francis Catholic Worker House (whose Catholic Workers helped start the Soup Kitchen in 1978). We are growing fresh produce for the Soup Kitchen and our neighbors in need. We began planting in March with onions, which the Soup Kitchen uses in enormous quantities. Tomatoes and greens are in progress!

Why urban farming?

Our Eucharistic faith calls us to make the land fruitful and offer our gifts to God. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis draws our attention to the concept of Integral Ecology— the idea that the health of our church and community depends on the health of the land around us. Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day saw farms as critical to the Catholic Worker. Peter Maurin, who came from a farming background, understood the alienation from community that comes with alienation from the land.

As Jim Eder pointed out in a March 2022 panel on the past, present and future of the Catholic Worker (held at St. Thomas of Canterbury), the mechanization of farming has increased exponentially. People know less and less about how food is produced and the toll industrial farming takes -- eroding community ties even more. So it may be time for Catholic Workers to return to the agricultural vision that both Peter and Dorothy saw as part of the Worker ethos, Jim argued.

We are very fortunate to have two students from Loyola University, Jace and Kathryn, interning with us over the summer! Kevin Erickson, director of sustainability at Loyola University, is also working with us on the project. We have been blessed with support from parishioners at Mary, Mother of God and Catholic Workers at St. Francis House.

St. Isidore, patron of farmers, and Servant of God Dorothy Day, pray for us!



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