

On Line and On Point

MARY MOTHER OF JESUS INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

marymotherofjesus.org

COMMUNITY RESPONDS—The Presiders/ Liturgist and Board members agree that with the increasing number of coronavirus cases being reported and the advice of our medical professionals to cancel gatherings of people, **we are cancelling our weekly liturgies for at least a month.** We will continue to write and print our liturgies and newsletter via the MMOJ webpage, www.marymotherofjesus.org and the MMOJ Facebook page.

Like all large planned gatherings, SURE Nehemiah Action Assembly for Monday, March 23, has been canceled

WHAT MORE TO DO?—We are currently in the middle of a global pandemic. This is a time to act wisely and well. From sources, I'm offering some guidance on what our faith community can do in addition to washing hands and sanitizing belongings to combat the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Our words and deeds can save lives.

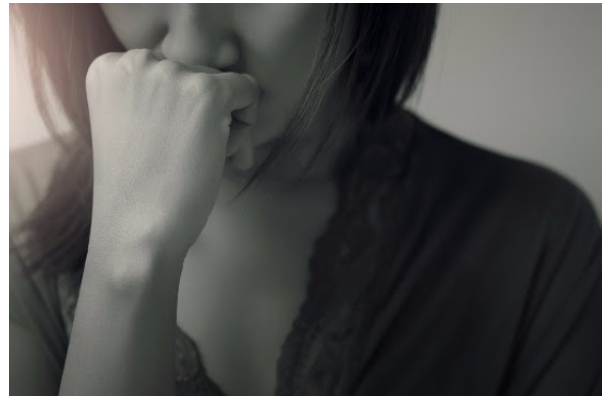
1. Show solidarity: share stories that emphasize the human dignity of people affected by COVID-19. Convey support, encouragement and respect.
2. Be preventative: Emphasize the prevention steps—hand washing with soap, social distancing, and not touching your face—are effective.
3. Use humanizing language: say “people who have coronavirus,” NOT “coronavirus cases.”
4. Don't assign blame: talk about people “becoming infected,” NOT “spreading the disease.”
5. NEVER use nationality, location or ethnicity to describe the disease.—United in Faith

LENT STILL ON—I have to believe that we need the solid predictability of Lent We need a time for deliberation, for slowing down, for contextualizing our pain within the larger pain of the world. This is not a time to take all that pain upon our shoulders and hold ourselves responsible for what we cannot change though. It is a time when we can solemnly say, yes, things are not going well right now. And it is not just my fault. We live in a fallen world. Humanity is collectively sinful. We must not abdicate responsibility for our personal sins, but we should also resist an unhealthy individualist tendency to

make Lent all about our personal brokenness. We are all dust. We are all hurting.

Coronavirus preventative measures are largely focused on social isolation, so as part of my Lenten practice now, I am thinking about alternative means of nourishing my relationships and communities. I will make phone calls and see friends when I can. I will support mutual aid efforts when I can.

We are in this together. We are responsible for each other. I will not reject Lent, but I will also refuse to allow Lent to become a season of despair. Lent has never been about despair: it asks us to take a sober look at our shared humanity. God does not want us to stay in the desert. God wants us to be honest about our hurt without forgetting that the hurt is not forever. In the end, after all, comes Easter.—Abby Ramone, Call to Action



WHAT HAPPENED?—As a community, we were swift in assessing the general situation as a new guide for liturgical gatherings was hastily provided last weekend for all, a guide that would “Protect You and Your Community’s Health,” as well as [in my opinion] eliminate [for a time] some of the very reasons I come to celebrate in, with and through the Body of Christ—MMOJ. Just deliberate on this: In General: Avoid touching, hugging, kissing, shaking hands. Be creative - find an alternative [that is what I did when I left the parish I formerly attended.] One of those old sayings we are fond of repeating fits here: Absence makes the heart grow fonder. We will

survive. The bigger picture swallows up our situation and makes it so insignificant in comparison. Shall we stay in touch through prayer, in supporting one another as we are able, in setting aside our weekly offerings and following the directions given us, in taking time to review this newsletter, reading over prayerfully the presented liturgy for the weekend, in making a phone call or three?—*Editor*

MMOJ BOOK DISCUSSION—As the community calls a halt to weekend gatherings, so also has Janet temporarily halted the forward progress of the Book Discussion group. Need any individual guidance or direction, do contact Janet at jblakeley1234@gmail.com or call 941.445.7795

WEEKEND OFFERING—As mentioned somewhere along the trail of emails marking this past week, we should not forget our obligation to support our community financially and our accepted obligation to support our outreach beyond our community—namely, **The Florida Center for Early Childhood**. While the members of MMOJ are participating in self isolation, we ask you to send your monthly/weekly donation to MMOJ, c/o St. Andrew United Church of Christ, 6908 Beneva Road, Sarasota, FL 34238 [we have a mailbox at St. A]

WINTER OUTREACH—The Outreach for this month will continue to be **The Florida Center for Early Childhood**. Please, on your MMOJ donation checks, indicate how much of the check you would like to go toward our Outreach ministry. We are very grateful for your continuous support.

YOU CAN HELP—Homeless need warm clothing—especially for men. Note: Most homeless men are small. Clothing more specifically means long pants and long johns, socks, warm Winter coats. Items can be delivered to Friendship Baptist Church, 5700 Palmer Ave., Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. You can call Judy Prince [941-323-6361], or Liz Wilson [same number] for more information. Say Bridget Mary sent you.

BOARD—New officers were appointed at Monday's Board meeting: Pat MacMillan, President, Joan Meehan, Treasurer, and Mary Al Gagnon, Secretary. Jim Brandi resigned from the Board due to a change in work hours which would prohibit him from attending Board meetings. WE NEED TWO MORE BOARD MEMBERS, PLEASE. Also, members of the Board along with Sally Brochu will be meeting with a bookkeeper candidate on Monday.

WEBSITE—As requested at the Annual Community Meeting, Nancy Steffke, our Facebook Administrator, will terminate her service at the end of March. Much thanks to Nancy for getting us onboard. Bridget Mary and Pat will assume these responsibilities and welcome any assistance from Community members.

LETTER—To our friends and partners in MMOJ: I was informed by our Treasurer that you decided at your Annual Community Meeting to increase the amount that MMOJ pays every month to St. Andrew UCC for the use of the facilities we share. In my annual pastor's report to the congregation of St. Andrew UCC for our upcoming Annual Congregational Meeting, I commented that "our partnership with Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community continues to remain strong." I know I speak for the folks for St. Andrew USS when I say that I consider you to be our partners and not our renters. I love knowing that you are a part of our common life—and I wanted to be the first one to say "thank you" for your generosity and for your presence among us. Prayers and blessings—Rev. Paul T. Werner

ZOOM—The Presiders are working on setting up ZOOM. What is ZOOM? ZOOM is a Webinar. A webinar is an engaging online event where a speaker, or small group of speakers, deliver a presentation to a large audience who participate by submitting questions, responding to polls and using other available interactive tools. MMOJ participants can access ZOOM by following step by step instructions prepared by Mary Theresa Streck. It is user friendly and can be accessed via desktop, laptop computer, tablet or cell phone. A webinar is a more controlled environment. While there is no minimum size for a webinar, many more people can attend (up to 1,000 with appropriate licensing). Webinar roles are separated into panelists (as well as hosts/co-host, e.g. MMOJ Presiders) who are able to present in the webinar, and attendees who can join in live polling, Q and A's or attendees participating in the MMOJ liturgy.—*from Pat MacMillan*

MUSIC—Ann Cooke, Mary Kay Staudohar, Linda Lee Miller, Janet Blakeley and Mary Al Gagnon have agreed to serve on the search committee for a new Music Minister.

DISTRIBUTION—The weekly liturgy and OffLine/OnPoint, our weekly newsletter will be distributed via email for our members who do not have access via the MMOJ website or FaceBook.