

On Line and On Point

MARY MOTHER OF JESUS INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

marymotherofjesus.org



40TH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL—On Wednesday, Dec. 2, at 4 PM we will hold a special virtual memorial gravesite service to honor the four El Salvadoran Churchwomen Martyrs. Via ZOOM. We will gather, pray and reflect upon the significant witness of their lives for El Salvador and for us as well. All this we will do virtually around the gravesite of Jean Donovan, one of the four, whose earthly remains are interred at Sarasota Memorial Park. ZOOM connect will be forthcoming.

REFLECTIONS on last weekend’s Liturgy—Jim Marsh and Joan Pesce helped to end the liturgical year with a celebration of the Cosmic Christ who draws all within and embraces all. In his homiletic reflection on the great Matthew 25 Sheep and Goats Gospel, Jim stated that we are being pulled one way and another. We must make a difference with our lives as we work toward the unity provided by Christ. A number of community members provided further examples, with Kevin Connelly adding at the end, “To one who is given much, much is expected.”

OUTREACH—Until the end of the year 2020, we will be directing our financial gifts to the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, an umbrella group of multiple groups and organizations. We will be directing our donations to their “the Designated Fund” ...and in that large group, it will go to “Community Care,” directed by Kirsten Russell, Vice President for Community Impact.



PREPARING for this weekend’s Liturgy —This weekend is the beginning of the new Liturgical Year which is always the First Week of Advent, a season of hope. Says Elena Garcia: As we find ourselves in the midst of darkness and confusion which reaches out to engulf the citizens of this planet, there is hope. This season of hope offers us the opportunity to reflect on the fact that while we remain in darkness, it is a time given to us to grow as humankind. The readings address the awareness that black lives (all lives) matter; that Jesus is smack dab in the midst of that darkness and is the growth enabler; that hope is the light within that shows us how to anticipate with joy the fruits of the hidden growth that is and has been taking place in this darkness.

REMINDER
Feb 13, 2021
Annual
Community
Meeting

Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community Mission Statement
We are a Christ-centered community of equals, consisting of women and men, ordained and non-ordained, empowered by the Spirit whose mission is to worship, to serve, to promote compassion, justice and care for creation.

Presiding with Elena will be Cheryl Brandi with readers, Maryal Gagnon and Joan Meehan.

OFFERINGS—Please remember to make your regular donations to MMOJ by sending your check to MMOJ % St. Andrew UCC, 6908 Beneva Road, Sarasota. FL 34238. We are grateful for your continued contribution toward the growth and development of our community. Again, tabulation of offerings and donations will be announced when they are received from St Andrew UCC and—in turn—sent to Joan Meehan, MMOJ Treasurer, for posting. Joan deposited \$350 on Nov 25.

BIZARRE—More than 259,000 Americans have already died from COVID-19 -- yet instead of instructing churches to help stop the spread, at least two bishops are recklessly telling Catholics not to take potential new vaccines.

Bishop Joseph Brennan of Fresno, CA, has released a video telling Catholics to avoid vaccines made with stem cells, specifically mentioning Pfizer. Bishop Joseph Strickland, the notoriously right-wing bishop of Tyler, TX, likewise tweeted that Moderna's vaccine should be rejected because it's somehow "not morally produced."

Neither the Pfizer nor Moderna vaccines -- which are both 90% effective -- were made with stem cells. The National Catholic Bioethics Center, the anti-abortion Charlotte Lozier Institute, and even the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops support both vaccines.

That's right: Their own fellow bishops reject Brennan and Strickland's deadly, uninformed rhetoric. But two prominent leaders can still cause enormous damage, harming thousands of people by spreading disinformation and risking innocent lives in Jesus's name.—reported in the National Catholic Reporter

GIVING THANKS—in the midst of this pandemic we have... grappled with the persistence of systemic racism and injustice in our communities and nation. While I am enraged with the full force of righteous anger in the face of such inexcusable violence against people of color, oftentimes deployed with impunity especially by law enforcement officers, I have found myself reflecting with gratitude on the condition that has made such widespread and growing awareness of these horrifying realities possible.

As people of color rightfully note, such injustice and anti-Black violence is not new. But what is new is the omnipresence of smartphones, access

Good reason to be very thankful: Sally is back home from the hospital!

to the Internet, social media platforms and other means of communications technologies that allow for widespread dissemination of indisputable evidence of systemic racism in action. I am thankful for the technology that forces our society to face its own demons and inequity, its violence and racism. The only way such evils can be confronted and changed is if those white people who have the privilege to otherwise ignore these realities cannot ignore them any longer.

As hard as this holiday season will be, I am tremendously thankful for the technologies that aid in that important work of racial justice, connect us to loved ones across great distances, and help develop lifesaving vaccines.—*Daniel P. Horan*, Duns Scotus Professor of Spirituality at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, National Catholic Reporter

FORMATION FOR NONVIOLENT LIVING

QUOTE—"Now we can no longer just give answers and explanations, we have to become the answer, and our own transformation is the only credible explanation. It seems we must tame and integrate the demon of violence within ourselves before we have anything to say to anybody else."—*Richard Rohr*

[The continuing presentation comes from John Dear's book entitled, "The Nonviolent Life.]"

PRACTICING NONVIOLENCE TOWARD OURSELVES

Dealing With Anger—Anger is a neutral emotion. Emotions are neither right or wrong. It depends upon how we speak or act on such an emotion. Anger comes from being hurt. If we act on that anger, retaliate with violence, and hurt those who have hurt us, maybe even kill, wage war or use nuclear weapons.

Jesus asks us not to repress our anger, which—sooner or later will come out. Rather, he urges us to deal with it, to channel negative energy,

through forgiveness and compassion into positive constructive work for the healing of others and the practice of creative nonviolence and universal love.

“If you bring your gift to the altar and there recall that your [sister and brother] has anything against you,” Jesus teaches, “leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your [sister and brother], and then come and offer your gift...”

Cultivate and interior nonviolence by seeking to be healed of our wounds, forgive those who have hurt us, and to make atonement and reconcile with those we have hurt.

To be reconciled means to apologize, make restitution, offer gifts to those who we have offended, and restore right relationship of nonviolent love with others.

Gandhi on anger—“I have learnt through bitter experience the one supreme lesson to conserve anger,” Gandhi said at the end of his life, “and as heat conserved is transmuted into energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power which can move the world.”

“It is not that I do not get angry,” he continued. “I do not give vent to my anger. I cultivate the quality of patience as angerlessness, and generally speaking, I succeed. But I only control my anger when it comes. How I find it possible to control it would be a useless question for it is a habit that everyone must cultivate and must succeed in forming by constant practice.”

Dealing with Grief—We all feel so helpless and powerless in the face of widespread suffering,

daily violence and global destruction. If we take time each day to grieve the suffering and death of sisters and brothers, to grieve the violence around us and within us, to grieve the destruction of the earth, we will discover a new healing peace, as well as new strength to go forward on the path of nonviolence to do what we can to relieve human suffering and protect creation. This is one of the promises of the nonviolent Jesus: “They shall be comforted.”



If we don't grieve, then we do not care about our sisters and brothers or creation. If we don't grieve, then we are inhuman, and not nonviolent. The practice of grief allows the compassion within to breathe and stretch and the possibilities of universal love to grow within and among us. If we learn to grieve regularly, as Jesus recommends, we will awaken to our common humanity, expand our hearts, widen our compassion, and discover new horizons of peace. We will become like him, people of genuine, all-embracing, universal nonviolence.

The good news is that Jesus does not leave us in grief. He calls us to rejoice! “Joy lies in the fight, Gandhi once said, “in the attempt, in the suffering involved, not in the victory itself.”

How do we cultivate joy? Even as we face the most dire injustices and stare down the power of empire, and endure the greatest rejection, abandonment, even imprisonment, we can maintain as inner joy which the forces of death will never take away from us.

[to be continued]