

On Line and On Point

MARY MOTHER OF JESUS INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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In all my years of traveling around the world, one thing has been present in every region, everywhere. One thing has stood out and convinced me of the certain triumph of the great human gamble on equality and justice.

Everywhere there are people who, despite finding themselves mired in periods of national [disruption] or personal marginalization refuse to give up the thought of a better future or give in to the allurements of a deteriorating present. They never lose hope that the values they learned in the best of times or the courage it takes to reclaim their world from the worst of times are worth the commitment of their lives. These people, the best of ourselves, are legion and they are everywhere. It is the unwavering faith, the open hearts, and the piercing courage of people from every level of every society that carries us through every major social breakdown to the emergence again of the humanization of humanity. In every region, everywhere, they are the unsung but mighty voices of community, high-mindedness, and deep resolve. They are the prophets of each era who prod the rest of the world into seeing newly what it means to be fully alive, personally, nationally, and spiritually. . . .

It is that steadfast, unyielding, courageous commitment to the eternal Will of God for Creation—whatever the cost to themselves—that is the prophetic tradition. It sustains the eternal Word of God while the world spins around it, making God's Word—Love—the center, the axle, the standard of everything the faithful do in the midst of the storm of change that engulfs us as we go. . . .

Our task is to be obedient all our lives to the Will of God [which is Love] for the world. And therein

lies the difference between being good for nothing and good for something. Between religion for show and religion for real. Between personal spirituality that dedicates itself to achieving private sanctification and prophetic spirituality, the other half of the Christian dispensation.

Yes, the Christian ideal is personal goodness, of course, but personal goodness requires that we be more than pious, more than faithful to the system, more than mere card-carrying members of the Christian community.

Christianity requires, as well, that we each be so much a prophetic presence that our corner of the world becomes a better place because we have been there. . . . The quality of life we create around us as "followers of Jesus" is meant to seed new life, new hope, new dynamism, the very essence of a new world community.—Joan Chittister



REFLECTIONS on last weekend's Liturgy—

Beginning with a short but delightful video by the Jesuit, Jim Martin, we reflected on the lives of the honored saints who have gone before us as well as those saints-in-the-making who are still with us. It is the latter group that was shared after the homily by community members remembering those who so strongly influenced them on the journey of life. Bouyed by the strong message of the Beatitudes, the pathway was set for all of us as we closed by singing, The Saints Go Marching In. This was led by music from Linda Lee and by video from Jack Meehan—reminding so many of us those days of early community history. As was suggested, this recessional should be played at all future liturgies honoring our community saints in transition.

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.

LIFE IS LIKE MUSIC—Kathryn Shea is heading a task force made up of volunteer MMOJ members, ordained and non-ordained. This committee will write a job description for our music ministry position(s), develop a process for handling performance assessments and how those issues will be resolved in a respectful and transparent manner and identify who will manage. So, committee members are needed. If you would like to help in this effort, please contact Kathryn at KSheaconsulting@outlook.com or call 941-650-6592.

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 —
Presider, Katy, says Hope is the central message of this weekend’s liturgy. Here is a poetic rendition to whet our appetite:
Hope is the energy that sustains a new vision while it makes its way from the realm of the imagination into the realm of manifest reality.
It is the child of longing and expectation;
desire in love with wisdom,
prayer married to thanksgiving.
Hope is not a powerless waiting for,
but a powerful welcoming
of the future we are creating.
It is an evolutionary act
that requires the total engagement
of body, mind and spirit.
It is not business as usual.
It is reorienting to a new star.
-- from Hope Transforms, the video

OFFERINGS Donations totaling \$935 was deposited on Oct. 19. Late mention due to failed communications. 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. Tabulation of offerings and donations are announced when they are received from St



Andrew UCC and—in turn—sent to Joan Meehan, MMOJ Treasurer.

REALLY—In our ugly and injurious present political climate, it has become all too easy to justify fear-filled and hateful thoughts, words, and actions in defense against the “other” side. We project our anxiety elsewhere and misdiagnose the real problem (the real evil), forever exchanging it for smaller and seemingly more manageable problems. The over-defended ego always sees, hates, and attacks in other people its own faults—the parts of ourselves that we struggle to acknowledge. We do not want to give way on important moral issues, but this often means we don’t want to give way on our need to be right, superior, and in control. It is our deep attachment to this false or manufactured self that leads us into our greatest illusions. Most of us do not see things as they are; we see things as we are.—Richard Rohr

NEED—Dear MMOJ Community, Once a year we ask you for a donation to People’s Catholic Seminary. Please consider supporting us and the work we do with our candidates and deacons. PCS is a not-for-profit organization and all courses are free for ARCWP candidates and deacons. The courses align with the ordination units and allow the participants to work in a cohort model where they share and comment on assignments with each other, program companions, and course facilitators. To read more about us and to donate, click here: <https://pcseminary.blogspot.com/>. With gratitude for each of you, Mary Theresa and Bridget Mary

REMEMBER—The addition of information on **Formation for Nonviolent Living** has been included in each weekend edition of OLOP [now four weeks] in order for our community to share in a vow of nonviolent living which will take place within the January 1 Liturgy, World Peace Day. If each of us take the time to read and reflect upon the content found on the next page, week after week [approx. seven more issues to be sent out], we should be ready. The next step is “willing.” Do you [do we] want to live a nonviolent life? The question can be answered as we progress in our learning each weekend. More will be revealed.

FORMATION FOR NONVIOLENT LIVING

NONVIOLENCE AND THE CROSS

Follow the Cross—On the cross, Jesus took in violence, transformed it, and returned only love. **This is the ultimate form of nonviolent response.** This is truly redemption. Here is how we might follow along the way.

Journey to Jerusalem—Small beginnings: When we stop nursing the ego wounded in some conflict, recognize and then resist the emotional satisfaction that comes from reviewing over and over the stale list of grievances. Then we are able to discipline ourselves to sit in silence in the Holy One's presence until some measure of peace is restored within and we can begin to respond with love. Our focus of attention needs to be on God's mercy rather than ourselves and our own hurt and difficulty.

Rejected along the way—Even when our peaceful overtures are rejected outright, we need to remain confident, to shake the dust off our feet, and know that the peace we have extended to others will return to us. This is the way of the cross for Jesus' disciples. It is very costly, but ultimately the path to true life and peace. Read Mark 6:11.

Changing along the way—As previously stated, our temptation in the face of conflict has been to respond in kind. Slowly and with the divine help of the Holy One we find ourselves beginning to resist this natural reaction and begin growing into self-sacrificing lovers—ultimately, to embrace all regardless of who or what. When others insist on their way, we let them have their way. We choose to be inconvenienced rather than see another suffer the same. We swallow the satisfying “come back,” and move on in silence—preventing escalation of verbal violence. We reach out to those who hurt us, refusing to let their attitude determine our own. We consciously choose to forget when past hurts rise in our memories and intrude into present interpersonal space [bringing up the past]. We forgive without waiting to be asked—and do it over and over and over again.

Doing it because we are called, we are loved—The above “changing,” examples of self-sacrificing love, are easily multiplied; but, living out their reality is painfully difficult. Why? Because such response cuts deep into the territory of the ego. It also requires careful discernment, so that self is always respected and real evil is resisted. We are not learning to be

doormats, to be trampled upon. Allowing others to repeatedly impose on us is not true love either. Foundational to any true love of neighbor is love of self. Only when we are centered in the self that is beloved by the Holy One can we risk self-sacrifice.

Nonviolent response in love ultimately involves sacrifice of self—This was certainly true for Jesus: Having loved his own who were in this world, he loved them to the end. As stated in the beginning of this session, it was on the cross, Jesus took in violence, transformed it, and returned only love. **This is the ultimate form of nonviolent response.** This is truly redemption. This is our pathway: Dying to self, so that the fulness of life be raised up in us—the life of Jesus, the Christ, who calls us to follow, to be transformed, to embrace the cross, and to die to any and all that keeps us from this ultimate transformation. *...to be continued*



To be
peacemakers,
we must first be
at peace
ourselves.