

On Line and On Point

MARY MOTHER OF JESUS INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

marymotherofjesus.org



COURSE OF NEW HOPE—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—In keeping with the theme of Advent and the

approaching coming of God in humanity, Kathryn asked us all “What do we need to do in preparing our hearts?” Community members were quick to provide salient responses. Bridget Mary spoke of the moment she was given prior to her recent surgery to be asked by the surgical team of nurses if she would like to join them in prayer. It was indeed an opportunity to proclaim the coming of the KINdom as they prayed. Anna Davis offered the possibility of opposing the cynicism of the day by a greater faith in the God of peace. A great summation was to be found in a later prayer offered at the time of Eucharist: Source of All That Is, we seek you in this season, when the earth is resting and preparing for new life. Like the earth, we long for new life and hopeful beginnings. This is the time of the pregnant woman, filled with life and hope powerful enough to topple structures of oppression.

CHRISTMAS LITURGY
Dec 24 at 4PM

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. As has been done so often in our past history of giving, Joan Meehan sent a gift of \$500 to Salvation Army for Christmas needs.

PREPARING for this weekend’s Liturgy —On Saturday, marking the third week of Advent,, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and John of the Cross. Lee Breyer and Kathryn Shea will preside.

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

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.

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. She wanted you all to know she posted \$2160 Dec 9!

FOR NEEDED PRAYER—Remember, members, family and friends in need of serious prayer on our behalf: Bridget Mary; Sally and Janet.

POEM

It's great to make mistakes
 They show us where we're wrong
 They teach us things are different
 Than we've thought all along
 It's great to make mistakes
 They teach us it's okay
 To do things the way we want to
 To learn along the way
 It's great to make mistakes
 They teach us all to try
 To do things we know how to do
 To learn how to get by
 It's great to make mistakes
 Or we'd all stay the same
 If we didn't have something to show
 Us how not to remain
 It's great to make mistakes
 It's great to get things right
 But if we learn, we can be a learner too
 Then we will be all right.
 —Donna Marcantonio c 2000



QUOTE—"Solidarity is not the same as support. To experience solidarity, we must have a community of interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite, to build Sisterhood. Support can be occasional. It can be given and just as easily withdrawn. Solidarity requires sustained, ongoing commitment."—bell hooks

ANGER—So many works of social justice have been undone by people who do all the fighting

from their angry selves. The gift contemplative practice brings to our emotions is awareness, the mental space to confront our emotional state in a safe way. . . . Anger is the dominant emotion for many activists. . . . Anger is not a bad or negative thing; it is actually the fuel that feeds our quest for justice. It is when we let anger lead to hateful actions that we lose its beneficial potential. . . . It is imperative that we realize that often the injustice or wrongdoing isn't personal but rather a societal ill and will always coexist with the peaceful lives we work hard to live. Practice: Stop, Breathe, Reflect and Respond.—Dan Edwards

MERTON—Thomas Merton entered the Abbey of Gethsemane in Bardstown, Kentucky, at the age of twenty-six, on December 10, 1941, a convert of three years, a pacifist, and a very experienced young man.

Merton was a man with a monastic soul who brought new levels of meaning to the oldest elements of monastic life. Merton knew what had often been forgotten in monastic history: that monasticism is not about withdrawal; monasticism is about depth.

Merton's new understanding of the stuff of contemplation led him beyond the boundaries of the order and into the very center of the contemplative vocation. As wars raged and racism consumed the country and feminism began to critique the established order, Merton began to look for bridges across the human divide. He became more and more interested in the monasticism of the Eastern religions, reaching out always for the intangibles that transcend boundaries and races and denominations in favor of that one unity that sanctifies us all, humanity. Contemplation, Merton knew, was the key to experiencing that unity because contemplation, whatever its denominational origin, is simply coming to view life through the heart of God. It is coming to see the world as God sees the world. As one.



Thomas Merton, Trappist, died December 10, 1968—Joan Chittister

FORMATION FOR NONVIOLENT LIVING

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

PRACTICING NONVIOLENCE TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE VIOLENT TO US

GANDHI—"It is not nonviolence if we are merely nonviolent to those who are nonviolent to us." True nonviolence, "the nonviolence of the strong," he called it, comes when we pit ourselves against those who do violence to us or others. If we can intervene, disarm and convert others to the truth of love and peace through our creative nonviolent action, then we practice authentic nonviolence.

We cannot sit by and remain passive with those who are violent. If we do, then we are merely cooperating with violence.

Everyone knows someone who is not nonviolent to them. What do we do? Though every situation is different, there are three things we can do: Reflect deeply on the situation; pray for those involved and for guidance; try to respond as best we can.

The key in every relationship and encounter is to maintain our nonviolence, help others deepen their nonviolence, and grow in peace, hope and love.

GREAT PRACTITIONER OF INTERPERSONAL NONVIOLENCE

—Though St. Therese of Lisieux died at the age of 24 in a cloistered Carmelite monastery in France in 1890, she became a spiritual master in the art of nonviolent love toward those around her, especially the most miserable and unpleasant. Ultimately, Therese waged assertive nonviolent love toward everyone.

Someone always triggers our violence—Who are the people who trigger our violence, our resentment, and our hatred? Whom do we not love, do not want to be nonviolent to? How do we make peace with them? Who has hurt us, whom do we want to hurt, and how can we transform these situations?

What do we do? We make them our teacher. They expose our inner violence to us. Our response to them measures our nonviolence.



What we do: Pray for them; pray over the situation; ponder what's going on inside them; learn what brought them to their violence; and explore creative nonviolent responses.

GERARD VANDERHAAR—Loving a difficult person nonviolently means first of all putting aside notions of winning. It is especially important, in working it out, to avoid self-righteousness and the kind of moral pressure that humiliates the other side. We recognize their weakness, embarrassment, and fears, as we acknowledge our own. Real progress comes from giving the other side options to respond to, not demands to be met. People react poorly to ultimatums. They generally become defensive and hardened in their positions. Through patient perseverance in loving, not necessarily liking, difficult people, we have a good chance to live in harmony, respecting their humanity while being true to our own.—from his book, *Personal Nonviolence: A Practical Spirituality for Peacemakers*.

GOING PUBLIC—All this growth in nonviolence toward those we know can help us for the day when we stand publicly for justice and peace. When we do stand up, speak out, and take nonviolent public action for peace and justice, we need to be prepared for a negative response, a hostile reaction.

Do not shout back at someone who shouts at you for your stand; do not be violent. Listen, let them speak, allow them to let off steam and accept that heat without retaliation. Become calm, quiet, attentive, compassionate and peaceful.

How do we respond to someone who threatens us with violence? Nonviolently! If we respond with similar anger or violence, we can be sure that we will receive the full brunt of promised violence. If we respond with reason, insight, wisdom, humor and creativity, using the methods of Gandhi and Jesus, we might disarm the opponent and make a new friend.

Remember—Every encounter provides an opportunity to experiment with the way of nonviolence, to test our nonviolence, and to grow so that we become authentic peacemakers, real practitioners of nonviolence in a world of violence.
[to be continued]