

On Line and On Point

MARY MOTHER OF JESUS INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

marymotherofjesus.org

CONNECTION—In the fall of 2020, preparations had begun for the 2021 MMOJ annual meeting. The Board of Directors needed to identify a recipient organization for the community's tithing funds for the upcoming quarter year. So it turned to Lee Breyer, who was—at that time—responsible for the MMOJ Outreach activities. There were two serious suggestions for the Board's consideration to receive the community donations: the Sarasota Ministerial Association (SMA) and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County (CFSC). Not knowing much about SMA, Lee decided to participate in several monthly meetings. Meanwhile, the MMOJ Board went on to choose the CFSC for its regular community donations. CFSC being a philanthropic organization, eventually led MMOJ to choose All Faiths Food Bank—current recipient for MMOJ donations. Lee, very satisfied by what he had learned from his time and experiences at SMA, decided to join as a member. He did so as a personal individual, and not as a representative of MMOJ.

A major and significant event took place on May 6, 2021, when Sarasota celebrated the National Day of Prayer. SMA had organized a local event that involved a large number of persons who met for prayers and comments on the spacious lawn of the Restoration Fellowship located on Richardson Road. Lee was present and actively participated. As it turned out, that location was not far from Kathryn Shea's office at the Florida Center for Early Childhood.

After the Day of Prayer event concluded, Lee stopped by and told Kathryn about what happened over at Restoration Fellowship and shared the printed program with her. She immediately recognized the name of someone she knew well. the President of the SMA organization—Rev. Dr. Tom Pfaff—the one who organized and supervised that prayer event. Kathryn and Tom had been friends for a long time.



Because of this occasion, they reestablished communications.

As a result, Kathryn was interested not only in resuming her own personal membership in SMA but also in establishing an organizational membership for MMOJ. Kathryn talked to MMOJ President of its Board of Directors, Joan Pesce, and received authorization to enroll MMOJ as a member of SMA. This meant that Lee and Kathryn had the approval of the Presidents of both organizations. SMA celebrated its twentieth anniversary on May 26, 2021. That event was held at St. Armands Key Lutheran Church, and attended by a large number of people representing a variety of faith-based organizations—many of which helped establish SMA two decades earlier. It was on this anniversary occasion, the the Sarasota Ministerial Association welcomed its newest member: Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community.—Lee Breyer

OFFERINGS—Thank you for your generosity. We are most grateful for your care and concern for our community. Please remember to make your regular donations to MMOJ by sending your check to MMOJ % St. Andrew UCC, 6908 Beneva Road, Sarasota, FL 34238. Again, tabulation of offerings and donations will be announced when they are received at St Andrew UCC. Remember: MMOJ continues to donate 5% of all offerings received each month to Outreach, and will continue to focus on current food and hunger issues of our surrounding communities.



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. Come join us.

Send articles/info by Wed to be published on weekend: rjbannerusa@gmail.com

OUTREACH—The current recipient of our offered financial support continues to be All Faiths Food Bank of Sarasota [AFFB]. AFFB is a member of Feeding America – a network of food banks across the country. One of its key objectives is to equitably serve agency partners who distribute food to those struggling with hunger. AFFB understands that hunger is a health issue and its mission is, “Together with our partners, we provide healthy solutions to end hunger in our community.” Some recent statistics: 22.4 million pounds of food was distributed last year; 186 agencies and programs are part of our network; 18.4 million meals were distributed to children, families, seniors, veterans and those in crisis last year; 30,649 volunteer hours help us to carry out our mission in 2020.

COMPASSIONATE

PEOPLE—All God appears to want from us is honesty and humility. There is no other way to read Jesus’ stories of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32) or the tax collector and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9–14). In each story, the one who did wrong ends up being right—simply because he is honest and humble about it. The one who is formally right ends up being terribly wrong because he is proud about his own performance. How have we been able to miss that important point? I suspect it is because the ego wants to think well of itself and deny any shadow material. Only the soul knows we grow best in the shadowlands.

Western civilization has failed to learn how to carry the shadow side. We did not teach our people how to carry the paschal mystery—with its suffering, death, and resurrection—within ourselves, and it is now coming back to haunt us. Christians have little ability to carry the shadow side of themselves, of the church, of history, or of reality itself. It is much easier to see things as all-good or all-bad, rather than both crucified and resurrected at the same time, as Christ is.

In many ways, it’s been a constant dilemma of the church. It seems to want to live in perfect light. It does not like the shadowland called Earth. We see in Christian history the Roman Church unable and unwilling to see its own huge shadow, Martin Luther’s abhorrence of his own shadow, the Swiss Reformers trying to outlaw darkness, the Puritans trying to repress shadow, typical believers afraid of their shadow, and fundamentalists preoccupied with Satan “out there.” All of us, it seems, are



trying to avoid the mystery in human life, instead of learning how to carry it patiently, as Jesus did. There are no perfect structures or perfect people. There is only the struggle to get there. It is Christ’s passion (patior in Latin, or the “suffering of reality”) that will save the world, when we are willing to join him in the pattern. “Your patient endurance will win you your lives,” writes Luke (21:19). Redemptive suffering instead of redemptive violence is the Jesus way. Patience comes from our attempts to hold together an always-mixed reality, not from expecting or demanding a perfect reality. That only makes us resentful and judgmental, which is what has characterized much of Christian history. Grateful people emerge in a world rightly defined, where

even shadows are no surprise, but, in fact, opportunity for compassion and forgiveness.

The more attached we are to any persona whatsoever, bad or good, the more shadow self we will have. So we need conflicts, relationship difficulties, moral failures, defeats to our grandiosity, even seeming enemies, or we will have no way to ever spot or track our shadow self. They are our necessary

mirrors, and even then, we usually catch it out of the corner of our eye—in a graced insight and those gifted moments of inner freedom.—*Richard Rohr [suggested by Joan Pesce]*

COMPASSIONATE LIVING—Pax Christi Florida is offering for consideration a program that will expand one’s nonviolent commitment. The Compassion Course Online 2021 with Thom Bond begins this June and extends for one year of virtual learning. As we humans have developed other technologies, the technology of compassion has been developed too. This course provides the “how to” of creating more connection, understanding, and compassion in our daily lives – a way to create a world we will be happy to leave our children’s children. The work is challenging, at times confronting, and with perseverance, practice, focus, and dedication, it works. 6000 people were part of the 2020 course. Course begins June 23, 2021, with registration open until June 22. [Course is from June, 2021 to June, 2022]. For a greater appreciation of how the course develops, check it out by going to www.compassioncourse.org—*from Pax Christi Florida*