

On Line and On Point

MARY MOTHER OF JESUS INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
marvmotherofjesus.org



SYNOD-Part Three [part one was a full presentation two weekend's ago; part two was the one and only response received to the issue of the Synod] Having recently asked the MMOJ Board if our community plans to offer some response to the Synod's invitation for feedback, Joan Pesce—president, offered a concise and precise statement of our community's position [included below]. Members of the board were desirous that I reprint the particular questions raised by the Synod, and foresaw a more formal response be elicited from the community via a future Zoom session/discussion. The format of questions are on page 3.

[Joan's response] "Some of us think that the Bishops in many dioceses are not doing anything to facilitate a response to the Synod questions. It sends the message that the hierarchy in the institutional church is not really interested in the experience or suggestions of the people. It gives the impression that the input will be ignored. So some of us who

have found a community that is creating a new model of church think that we should just continue and help others who are searching for a more meaningful experience of church. Let our actions create the change. This is only one way of responding and certainly not the only way.." *[Which gives reason, in spite of the dire prediction, for a broader based response from members of MMOJ!]* The next step?

OFFERINGS—If you have made a recent donation to our community, we thank you for your generosity. We are most grateful for your demonstrated care and concern. Please remember to make your regular donations to MMOJ by sending your check to MMOJ % St. Andrew UCC, 6908 Beneva Road, Sarasota. FL 34238.

Remember: MMOJ continues to donate 5% of all received offerings each month to Outreach, which will continue to focus on real issues of food and hunger in our surrounding communities.

OUTREACH—The current recipient of our offered financial support continues to be All Faiths Food Bank of Sarasota [AFFB] in its task of providing food for hungry and needy children. Hunger deprives children of more than just food. Child hunger equals serious health consequences as well as negative

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.

impacts on prospects for future success. Your gift is critical in helping to provide the nutritious food boys and girls need to learn, grow, and thrive. You can help keep them full all year long by supporting All Faiths Food Bank's Campaign Against Childhood Hunger—our community's strongest line of defense against child hunger. Through our partners and various programs, AFFB works hard to make sure children receive the help they need. Child hunger is a problem we can solve together.

"True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice." MLK

101 Ways to Foster Nonviolence in your life

41. Praise God.
42. Let go of fear.
43. Don't buy war toys.
44. Celebrate diversity.
45. Reach out to someone who is hurting.
46. Conserve energy and water.
47. Celebrate the beauty of life and creation.
48. Let elected representatives know which policies you approve of and disapprove of.
49. Affirm and support your friends and family.
50. Stop rumors.—*to be continued*

MOVIE CORNER—This week's movie recommendation, **Don't Look Up**, comes from Jerry Bires who wrote "A scathing satire about the policies, politics and people on the far right whose behavior has vexed us the past five years." The movie is an amazing satire with an incredible star studded cast

including Jennifer Lawrence, Leonardo DiCaprio, Cate Blanchett and Meryl Streep playing what I can only describe as a spot on female version of Donald Trump. The only thing not funny about this superbly written movie is that it might be too close to the truth. It is now streaming on Netflix. Keep sending your comments, criticisms, suggestions, to ponce.beth@gmail.com —*Beth Ponce*

DREAMING—*[a gay priest and leading U.S. theologian, invokes the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as he shares about his dreams for a church in which there is equality for all. "Despite the gains and progress of recent years, the struggle of LGBTQ persons for decency and equality remains, in the words of the poet Langston Hughes, "a dream deferred." . . . But I want to warn against moving too quickly to see the deep parallels between King's quest for racial justice and LGBTQ strivings for equal justice. . . And so, I, too, still have dreams. I dream of a time when the LGBTQ community will see racism as their issue because it already is our issue.*



I dream of a day when two men and two women can stand before our Church, proclaim their love, and have it blessed in the sacrament of marriage. I dream of a Church that enthusiastically celebrates same-gender loves as incarnations of

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God's love among us. I dream of a Church where gay priests and lesbian sisters (and, one day, lesbian priests!) are acknowledged as the holy and faithful leaders they already are.

I dream of a world where queer young people in Honduras, El Salvador, Ghana, and Afghanistan can step out of hiding and live without fear."—*Fr. Bryan Massingale*

THE RIGHT WORDS DON'T

MATTER—Contemplation is not the practice of saying prayers. It is the growing, overwhelming consciousness of God within and around us, before us and beyond us. It is God embedded in our souls and at the helms of our hearts. It is the awareness of God that is, as Paul says, "praying without ceasing."

What we have come to know about God, we now begin to live in our daily lives: that Black lives matter, for instance; that women are equal to men and as much bearers of the Spirit as men will ever be; that everything we do as individuals, as countries, must reflect the will of God for all of creation. Suddenly we realize that God is everywhere, is alive in our lives, is the light on the road that beckons us on. Every major religious tradition calls us beyond forms of religion to faith in God, to depth of soul. Then, when the soul is as broad as the sky, we are ready to break down the false boundaries between peoples. We are spiritually mature enough to center ourselves on the fulfillment of the God life within us rather than simply make the things of God our gods.

The deification of things is everywhere in religion. Through this a false orthodoxy—meaning keeping things the way they've "always been"—becomes the goal and the will of God for creation becomes less

of the essence of our spirituality and more like a distraction on the way.

Islam puts it this way: Once upon a time a Sufi made the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. It was a long walk for him, and the sun was high. He had come miles without stopping. Finally, in sight of the great mosque at Mecca, sure of the goal now, the old man lay down in the road to rest.

Suddenly one of the other pilgrims shook him awake, rough and harsh in the doing of it. "Wake up," he commanded. "You blaspheme, Sufi! You lie in such a way that your feet are pointed toward the holy mosque! What kind of Sufi are you?" The old Sufi opened one eye, smiled, and said, "I thank you, holy sir. Now would you be kind enough to turn my feet in some direction where they are not pointed toward God?"

This is the difference between prayer and contemplation. Prayer says the words. Contemplation understands that in the end the right words don't matter. In contemplation we discover that there is a difference between orthodoxy and the consciousness of God in life.

So often, rule keepers remember to keep the rules because rule keeping is so safe. All I have to do to be holy is to check off the practice, while I forget, if I ever knew, its purpose. Contemplation, on the other hand, goes beyond the spine or structures of a religious community, beyond its customs books or rule books or historical development to its innards, to its mystical end, to the energy that created it and drives it. The contemplative life is more than prayers or rituals or sermons. It is all of those things but more. It is about the experience of God. It is the fullness of the Tradition come to life again in us.—*from Monastic Heart by Joan Chittister*

THE SYNOD'S FOUNDATIONAL QUESTION

A Synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together." How is this "journeying together" happening today in the Church?

How is the Holy Spirit inviting you to "journey together" with the Church?

Where do you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit calling you closer to the Church?

THE SYNOD'S FIVE CORE QUESTIONS

1. LISTENING

How is God speaking to you through the voices that are in your life?

How is God speaking to you through voices we sometimes ignore, including those on the peripheries?

What space is there in your life to listen to the voices on the peripheries of the Church, especially cultural groups, women, the disabled, those who experience poverty, marginalization, or social exclusion?

2. SPEAKING OUT

What enables or hinders you from speaking up courageously, candidly, and responsibly in the Church and society?

What space is there in our parishes for the voice of people, including active and inactive members of our faith?

3. SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR COMMON MISSION AND

SHARING AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

How are you able to participate in the mission of the Church to proclaim the Gospel?

What hinders you from being active in your parish?

How is authority or governance exercised in your local parish and in the Church?

4. DISCERNING AND DECIDING

How does your parish use the methods of listening and speaking (consultation) to make decisions?

How does your parish promote participation in decision-making within the hierarchical structures of the Church?

Does the decision-making methods of your parish help you to listen to all members of the community, including those who are on the peripheries of parish life?

5. CELEBRATION

How do prayer and liturgical celebrations, especially Sunday Mass, inspire and guide you?

How does your prayer life and celebration of the Mass inspire and inform your personal decisions and decisions?

How does the parish invite all Catholics, including cultural communities, youth, families and persons with disabilities and their families, into the active life of the parish, especially Sunday Mass?