

On Line and On Point

MARY MOTHER OF JESUS INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
marymotherofjesus.org

WAITING IS NOT EASY--Advent is one of the most difficult periods of the church's liturgical cycle and all of the life questions the scriptures bring. Why? Because Advent is all about waiting. And waiting is not easy.

As life goes on, the liturgical cycles seem to become more and more meaningful to me. Perhaps after you've done enough living you come to understand that every life waits, suffers, comes to new life and rejoices in the ordinary. Advent is especially meaningful because it teaches me to wait without complacency, to wait without compliance.

There is so much to wait for now in life: human development, love, peace in the church and in the world. And most of us do not wait well for what we want or what we are meant to be. We get impatient or we get depressed. We question or we doubt. We argue or we get alienated.

And now, we all wait, not for the coming of Christ—God took care of that—but for the coming of the Gospel, which we are delaying in the name of God.

The key to the contradictions must be in the waiting. The question is, What is there about the waiting that is redemptive?

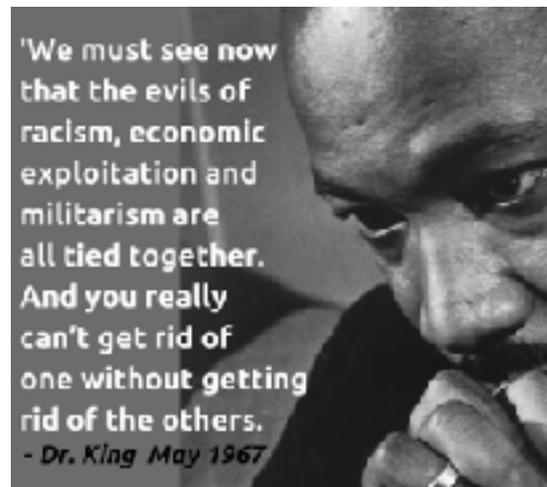


The chosen people taught us how to wait and why. They waited for years and decades and centuries through captivity and the destruction of the temple and the Roman occupation. And they never gave up.

Now women must wait through the captivity of their full humanity by the church. Now nations must wait through the mad planning for the destruction of the planet by government sick with power and paranoid with fear. Now the poor and uneducated and middle-class unemployed must

wait, through occupation by the militaristic mind-set for the return of social programs and high ideals for all.

But while we wait we can learn and grow and become stronger than ever in our convictions. We can be conscientious and creative. And no matter who wants to suppress us or to silence us, we can be signs of hope that never, never go away until, someday, the star finally shines.—*Joan Chittister*



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

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

Bank of Sarasota [AFFB] in its mission of providing food for hungry and needy children. AFFB seeks to equitably serve agency partners who distribute food to those struggling with hunger. AFFB focuses on the population in our community known as the Asset Limited, Income Constrained Employed {ALICE}. The ALICE population represents those among us who are working, but due to childcare costs, transportation challenges, high cost of living and so much more are living paycheck to paycheck.

MOVIE CORNER

We recently enjoyed a movie on Netflix that we had never heard of before called **Te Ata**. The story is set in the early 1900's and is based on the life of Mary Frances Thompson, a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation known as a Native American story teller. Although the movie does not shy away from the tragic treatment of the Native Americans, neither does it sensationalize it.

The movie is well acted but, except for Graham Greene, the actors were fairly unknown to us. The lead is played by Q'orianka Kilcher a young woman of Peruvian and Swiss/German descent. Her name is in the Quechua language indigenous to the Andes in Peru and she is an activist for human rights and environmental issues.

Be sure to watch through the credits for real life photographs of Te Ata.

Send your comments, criticisms, suggestions, thumbs up or down. And most of all PLEASE SEND YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHAT TO WATCH to ponce.beth@gmail.com —*Beth Ponce*

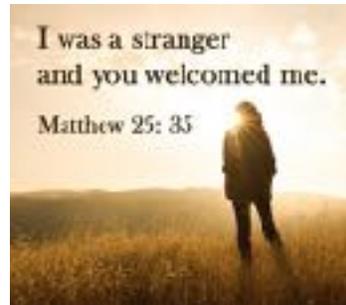
VISION PROBLEMS—The purpose of prayer and religious seeking is to see the truth about Reality, to see what is. And at the bottom of what is is always goodness. The foundation is always love. Here is a mantra that we might repeat throughout our day: "God's life is living itself in me. I am aware of life living itself in me."

We cannot not live in the presence of God. We are totally surrounded by God, even as we read these words. This is not some New Age idea; recall St. Patrick's (c. 373–c. 463) blessing, "God beneath you, God in front of you, God behind you, God above you, God within you."

Once I can see the Mystery here, and trust the Mystery even in this piece of clay that I am, then I can also see it in you. We are eventually able to see the divine image within ourselves, in each

other, and in all things. Finally, the seeing is one. How we see anything is how we will see everything.

Jesus pushes this seeing to the social edge. Can we recognize the image of Christ in the least of



our fellow human beings? That is his only description of the final judgment (see Matthew 25). Nothing about ten commandments, nothing about church attendance—simply a matter of our ability to see.

Can we meet Christ

in the "nobodies" who can't play our game of success? In those who cannot reward us in return? When we see the image of God where we are not accustomed to seeing the image of God, then we see with the infinitely tender eyes of God. Finally, Jesus says we have to love and recognize the divine image even in our enemies (see Matthew 5:44). He teaches what many leaders, spiritual and otherwise, could never demand of their followers: love of the enemy. Logically that makes no sense. Yet soulfully it makes absolute sense, because in terms of the soul, it really is all or nothing. Either we see the divine image in all created things, or we end up not seeing it very well at all. There is a first epiphany, and gradually the circle keeps moving outward, widening its embrace. It is almost the core meaning of a whole and holy life!

The Christian vision is that the whole world is a sacred temple. If that is true, then our enemies are sacred, too. Who else created them but God? The ability to respect the outsider is probably the litmus test of true seeing. And it doesn't stop with human beings and enemies and the "least of these." It moves to frogs and water and weeds. Everything becomes enchanting once we have full sight. One God, one world, one truth, one suffering, and one love (see Ephesians 4:4–6). All we can do is participate and enjoy. I love to ask Christians—why would anyone be afraid of that?—*Richard Rohr*

QUOTE—"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. Maybe many of us won't be here to greet her, but on a quiet day, if I listen very carefully, I can hear her breathing."—*Arundhati Roy*

STAFF—*Russ Banner, editor; Joan Pesce, Lee Breyer, Anna Davis, text review; Beth Ponce and Dotty Shugrue, features*

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1. PURSUING NONVIOLENCE—Year II—Supporting our community need to **renew** a vow of nonviolence for a second time. Heading toward January 1st.

PURSUING NONVIOLENCE—By John Dear—

“To me, nonviolence is the all-important virtue to be nourished and studied and cultivated,” Dorothy Day wrote in 1967.

She regretted that she had not done more to promote nonviolence as a way of life. I believe, we can all do more to nourish, study, cultivate, and promote nonviolence as a way of life. As a spiritual path, as the basis for people power, as a political methodology for change, and as a hermeneutic for Christian discipleship, active nonviolence is the best hope for humanity.

Gandhi taught that nonviolence was the way of God, Jesus the greatest practitioner of nonviolence in history, the Sermon on the Mount is the greatest teachings on nonviolence in history, and that the Gospel way of nonviolence holds the key for us personally, collectively, and globally as a way out of our self-destructive violence.

Most of us can cite chapter and the verse of the latest crisis of systemic violence. We know well the pandemic of violence around us—racism, mass incarceration, police brutality, sexism, corporate greed, starvation, homelessness, poverty, gun violence, executions, wars, nuclear weapons, and environmental destruction.

What we cannot recite is the antidote—the methodology of active, creative nonviolence which can be applied to any and every social ill, as well as our hardened hearts, to steer us toward a most just, more peaceful, more nonviolent world.

In my book *The Nonviolent Life*, I propose a simple framework to nourish and cultivate nonviolence in our lives and our world.

Nonviolence, I submit, requires three

simultaneous attributes—you cannot do just one, you have to pursue all three simultaneously.

We have to be totally nonviolent to ourselves; at the same time, we try to be meticulously nonviolent to everyone around us, every human being on the planet, all creatures, and Mother Earth; and at the same time, we actively participate in the global grassroots movements of creative nonviolence for a new culture of justice, disarmament and environmental sustainability.

Most of us are good at one of these. Some of us are good at even two of these. But few of us reach the holistic nonviolence of Gandhi and King and manage all three attributes at the same time.

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Many of us are committed activists, for example, but we are terrible at practicing nonviolence toward ourselves or those around us. Others of us cultivate inner peace and are peaceful to those around us, but do not lift a finger to serve the homeless, fight injustice, or speak out against war and environmental destruction.

In this way, we are not just part of the problem: we are the problem. Our silence is complicity with systemic violence and injustice.

JANUARY 1, 2022—WORLD DAY OF PEACE

We are invited as a community, to renew the Vow of Nonviolence, which we initially enacted as a community last January 1.

To prepare for this event, please read over our texts published these three weeks before the event, prepare personally with prayer, and you might be moved to invite another friend or family member to join with us.

JANUARY 1, 2022—VOW OF NONVIOLENCE

As the world's violence worsens, our nonviolence has to deepen. Jesus calls us to practice his holistic, total nonviolence—the height and breadth and length and width of nonviolence as universal love, universal compassion, universal peace. That

we non-cooperate with every trace of violence within us and in the culture, and—in our lives—we not only resist systemic violence but work for a new culture of nonviolence, disarmament, justice for the poor, and peace.———*to be continued*

—Late addition—

POPE FRANCIS IS ASKING THE US BISHOPS TO LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE. WILL THEY?"

by Phyllis Zagano,
Religion News Service, Washington Post

"Everybody likes Pope Francis. Except, it seems, U.S. Catholic bishops. On the other hand, no one seems to like the bishops — they damaged their own credibility with their 2002 'Dallas Charter' on clerical sex abuse, which sanctioned only priests and deacons but left bishops alone. It was former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, known then, as now, for his own predatory acts, who suggested eliminating bishops from the document.

"Once again, today, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops seems bereft of common sense. Forget the worldwide Synod on Synodality, a listening exercise ordered by Francis, who wants to hear from Catholics and non-Catholics alike about how the church can move forward in the current century. Many American bishops are content to ignore it: Only half of the U.S. bishops have even named someone to run the synod project in their dioceses. That is, half of the U.S. bishops are not interested in what the people of God think.

"At its fall meeting last month, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a \$28 million budget for a 'Eucharistic Congress' in Indianapolis in the middle of July 2024. There is no published USCCB synod budget. But it is about more than just the money. The Eucharistic Congress is about what priests and bishops control: the sacraments. Yet the church belongs to its people. Everybody knows that only a priest or bishop can preside at Mass, but the word "liturgy" literally means "people's work." And this is the heart of the tension between the USCCB and Francis: whether the Eucharist belongs to the priest or to the people.

"Eight years ago, Francis wrote that access to Communion is not a 'prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.' The USCCB's focus is on what they can do. The pope's focus is on what the people can do. The USCCB seems to want to close doors. The pope wants to open them. ..."

My Response: If the bishops and Pope Francis listened to the people, the ban against contraception would be lifted, Catholics in second-marriages without annulments would be invited to receive Communion and women priests and married priests would be serving inclusive, egalitarian, empowered communities of faith. The hierarchical structure of Roman Catholicism must be transformed into a circular model of a discipleship of equals in which the celebration of the sacraments and decision-making is the work of the people, not the ordained alone.—*Bridget Mary Meehan*