

# On Line and On Point

## MARY MOTHER OF JESUS INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

[marymotherofjesus.org](http://marymotherofjesus.org)

### THE COMMUNAL PARADOX—

Life, we learn young, is one long, unending game of push and pull. One part of us pushes us always toward wholeness, toward a sense of connection with the universe which, in the very act of engagement with the human community, brings us a sense of peace. We are not here as isolates, we realize. We are here to become community. We are on an odyssey with potentiality, and we know it. We have been foreordained to make humanity more humane.

The other part of us, however, pulls us back into ourselves. It separates us from the universe around us and leaves us feeling distant and out of sync. We lack the sense of kinship that the human family is a family. It deprives us of the universal concern that drives us beyond ourselves to the center of humankind...

And yet, it is this very paradox of life that stretches us not only to grow but to contribute to the growth of the rest of the universe around us.

We say we seek unity, yes. But lurking within every human act is the gnawing need to be independent, to think of ourselves as distinct from the rest of life. Thomas Merton recognized this same paradox at the heart of what we think of



as “salvation”: We cannot find ourselves within ourselves, but only in others, yet at the same time before we can go out to others we must first find ourselves. We must forget ourselves in order to become truly conscious of who we are. The best way to love ourselves is to love others, yet we cannot love others unless we love

ourselves since it is written, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” [Mark 12:31]. But if we love ourselves in the wrong way, we become incapable of loving anybody else. . . .

The only effective answer to the problem of salvation

must therefore reach out to embrace both extremes of a contradiction. . . .

Only when we see ourselves in our true human context, as members of a race which is intended to be one organism and “one body,” will we begin to understand the positive importance not only of the successes but of the failures and accidents in our lives. My successes are not my own. The way to them was prepared by others. The fruit of my labors is not my own: for I am preparing the way for the achievements of another. . . .

Every other human is a piece of myself, for I am a part and a member of humankind. . . . What I do is also done for them and with them and by them. What

### 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, peace and care for creation. Come join us.

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they do is done by me and in me and for me. But each one of us remains responsible for our own share in the life of the whole body.—*Merton and Chittister*

**QUOTE**—It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality.—*MLKJR*

**OFFERINGS**— We are grateful for your continued contribution toward the growth and development of our community. Thanks so much. 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 is All Faiths Food Bank of Sarasota [AFFB] in its task of providing food for hungry and needy families and children. Please be generous with your offerings. When you donate to All Faiths Food Bank, your gift provides meals to children, families and seniors in our community. AFFB is proud to say that 92 cents of every dollar donated goes directly to hunger-relief efforts.

**BOOKS**—James Patterson, the most prolific author of our time [see the space

given in your local library], together with Maxine Paetro—sharer in 20 or so books with James, published in 2016, **Woman of God**. Definitely not a hard read in that chapters are usually short, to the point, and just seem to slip by with a moving story of a woman that has all the drama and development of life's journey—much like the testimonies of so many of our ARCWP when ordained. The book champions women's ordination, participation, and leadership in today's church. Maxine and James include sufficient evidence that God [connoted only as male] through the Holy Spirit [a soft breeze...a warm feeling] is moving a woman named Brigid to lead a church onward in spite of opposition. [Have we heard this before?] A good read, if you have not read it before! *[editor]*

## MOVIE CORNER

The 2021 biopic, **Respect**, is the true story of . . . who else but Aretha Franklin. The performances were excellent from Jennifer Hudson as Aretha and Forest Whitaker as her difficult father down to Skye Dakota Turner as the child Aretha and everyone in between. The movie touches on some difficult issues without sensationalism and is set against the tumultuous times of the civil rights movement. The music is wonderful. I was singing Aretha songs for days afterward. Thanks to **Mary and Jack** for recommending this movie which is available on Amazon Prime Video.

—*Beth Ponce*

Send your suggestions for movies to watch, to [ponce.beth@gmail.com](mailto:ponce.beth@gmail.com)

**QUOTE II**—“Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.”—*MLKJR*

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

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