

On Line and On Point

MARY MOTHER OF JESUS INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

marymotherofjesus.org

UNIVERSAL PATHS TO REACH AND CHANGE US

—Two universal paths of transformation have been available to every human being God has created: great love and great suffering. These are offered to all; they level the playing fields of all the world religions. Only love and suffering are strong enough to break down our usual ego defenses, crush our dualistic thinking, and open us to Mystery. In my experience, they like nothing else exert the mysterious chemistry that can transmute us from a fear-based life into a love-based life. None of us are exactly sure why. We do know that words, even good words or fine theology, cannot achieve that on their own. No surprise that the Christian icon of redemption is a man offering love from a crucified position! Love and suffering are part of most human lives. Without any doubt, they are the primary spiritual teachers more than any Bible, church, minister, sacrament, or theologian. Wouldn't it make sense for God to make divine truth so readily available? If the love of God is perfect and victorious, wouldn't God offer every human being equal and universal access to the Divine as love and suffering do?



This is what Paul seems to be saying to the Athenians in his brilliant sermon at the Areopagus: “All can seek the Deity, feeling their way toward God and succeeding in finding God. For God is not far from any of us, since it is in God that we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:27–28). What a brilliant and needed piece of theology to this day! Love is what we long for and were

created for—in fact, love is what we are as an outpouring from God—but suffering often seems to be our opening to that need, that desire, and that identity. Love and suffering are the main portals that open the mind space and the

heart space (either can come first), breaking us into breadth and depth and communion. Almost without exception, great spiritual teachers will have strong and direct guidance about love and suffering. If we never go there, we will not know these essentials. We'll try to work it all out in our heads, but our minds alone can't get us there. We must love “with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind, and our whole strength” (Mark 12:30).

Finally, there is a straight line between love and suffering. If we love greatly, it is

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.

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

fairly certain we will soon suffer, because we have somehow given up control to another. That is my simple definition of suffering: whenever we are not in control.
—*Richard Rohr*

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.

OUTREACH—The current recipient of our offered financial support is the **Community Foundation of Sarasota Season of Sharing**. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are relying on the time-tested and trusted Season of Sharing partnership with the Herald Tribune Media Group and multiple nonprofit agencies to help the most vulnerable individuals and families with immediate basic needs such as payments for rent, utilities, child care, transportation, and food vouchers.

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.

SYNOD 2021-23—...the estimated 650,000 synod participants represent a little more than 1% of the roughly 51 million Catholic adults in the United States. The diocesan reports indicate that about two-thirds of those who attended listening sessions were 55 or older, and that most of those participants were

women. An overwhelming majority of synodal participants were also white — 94% in the Diocese of Worcester, Massachusetts, for example — and were more likely to be married and attend Mass weekly.

Massimo Faggioli, a theologian and church historian at Villanova University who has written about the synod, told NCR that he was not surprised that participation occurred mostly among older white Catholics who are already involved in the church. He said parish and diocesan outreach in many locations appeared to be geared toward that familiar demographic.—*National Catholic Reporter [NCR]*

BOOKS

JOURNALS OF BROTHER ROGER OF TAIZÉ: VOLUME I: 1941-1968. By Brother Roger of Taizé; 132 pages; Cascade Books

In the midst of the current political polarization in the United States, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, to say nothing of the day-to-day horror of gun violence in our nation, what a treat to read Volume 1 of the newly translated Journals of Brother Roger of Taizé. Many know the monastery founded by Brother Roger Schutz as a Protestant center of prayer and work for Christian unity. Others know it for the chants and meditative singing. Still others come from far and wide to the French Burgundian countryside for retreat and renewal. However, Brother Roger's journal gives an insight not only into his hunger for unity but also into some of the struggles he encountered in the process and how he grew open to welcoming Catholics as part of that work for unity.—*Taken from a book review by Simone Campbell [NCR]*

STAFF—*Russ Banner, editor; Joan Pesce and Dorothy Sadowski, text review; Beth Ponce and Dotty Shugrue, features*

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