

# On Line and On Point

**MARY MOTHER OF JESUS INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

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

**AS ROHR SEES IT—**[Part Two]—CAC teacher Brian McLaren has long asked questions out loud that many have often asked only to themselves. In his new book *Do I Stay Christian?*, Brian outlines compelling reasons both to leave and stay within Christianity. Today we share his critique of Christianity's complicity with violence. Such truth-telling can be difficult to read. We invite you to practice the contemplative stance of "holding the tension of opposites": Echoing its founder's nonviolence, the Christian faith initially grew as a nonviolent spiritual movement of counter-imperial values. It promoted love, not war. Its primal creed elevated solidarity, not oppression and exclusion [see Galatians 3:26–28]. . . . The early Christians elevated the equality of friendship rather than the supremacy of hierarchy (John 15:15; 3 John 14, 15). This commitment to nonviolence rapidly eroded in the early fourth century when the emperor Constantine declared Christianity the religion of the empire. This led to an acceptance of violence and domination against the empire's enemies, but also perceived "enemies" from within: What the empire wanted to do, the church generally blessed. . . . This cozy



relationship with empire continued long after the Roman Empire had fully collapsed. The church supported the empire's many reincarnations in French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, British, Russian, German, and American imperial ventures. Each empire could count on the mainstream Christian church to bless its successes, pardon its failures, and pacify and unify its masses.

A community with a history of violence to Jews . . . does not sound like a safe place for non-Christians. But as a chaplain to empire, Christianity was not a particularly safe place for Christians either—at least not those who chose to differ from the authorities of the church or state.

Choosing to differ, in fact, was the root meaning of the word heresy. . . . Historians generally agree: while the records are unreliable and incomplete, at least tens of thousands of suspected nonconformists were prosecuted by church courts between 1180 and 1450; many thousands were tortured; over a thousand were executed by church authorities. . . . In a seventy-year period starting in 1560, 80,000 women were tried as witches and 40,000 were killed. . .

Today, abuse of Christians by Christians

## **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](mailto:rjbannerusa@gmail.com)

tends to be more emotional and spiritual than physical. But shunning and disowning (forms of relational banishment), public shaming and character assassination, private humiliations, church trials of nonconformists, blacklisting, and other forms of Christian-on-Christian cruelty continue, and more and more traumatized people are coming forward with their stories. . . .

To state the obvious: Jesus never tortured or killed or ruined the life of anyone, but the same cannot be said for the religion that claims to follow him. Knowing what I now know, if I were not already a Christian, I would hesitate in becoming one, at least until the religion in all its major forms offers a fearless, searching, public moral accounting for its past crimes . . . first, against Jews, and also against its own nonconformist members.—[to be continued]

**OFFERINGS**— We are grateful to everyone who has been so generous in supporting 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.

**OUTREACH**—The current recipient of our offered financial support is **Meals on Wheels of Sarasota** [Oct-Dec]. Since 2020, Meals On Wheels has increased meal capacity thanks to generous donors, local churches and businesses, and grants from foundations such as the William G. and Marie Selby Foundation, the Linnie E. Dalbeck Memorial Foundation, the Gulf Coast Foundation, and many others. This support has allowed Meals On Wheels to update its kitchen facilities and install new meal packaging equipment, enabling it to

prepare as many 1,000 freshly made meals simultaneously.

## MOVIE CORNER

While enjoying a lovely dinner this week with Mary and Jack, Jerry and Suzanne were telling us about the Netflix documentary **Salt Fat Acid Heat**. They liked it so much Suzanne bought the book and it has changed how they cook and eat.

In this four part series chef and food writer, Samin Nosrat explores these cooking keys. Each episode is set in a different locale; Fat in northern Italy, Salt in Japan, Acid in Yucatán and heat back home in California.

Bon Appétit!—*Beth Ponce*. Send your suggestions of movies to watch, to [ponce.beth@gmail.com](mailto:ponce.beth@gmail.com)

**LAMENTING INJUSTICE**— *In the ancient tradition of lament, this prayer from Latina activist and pastor Rev. Sandra Maria Van Opstal invites us to share with God our heartbreak at the world's suffering, and ask "How long, O [GOD]?"*

How long, [GOD]?

How long must we cry out?

How long must the vulnerable sit silent as bombs, guns, cages, natural disasters threaten lives? How long must we hear the agonizing silence of so many in the church? How long, [GOD]?

Are you listening? Yes? You do! You do?

You do see us! You do hear us!

(insert time to ugly cry)

We believe you are at work bringing peace. True peace—flourishing, wholeness, and well-being. . . .

We believe and we feel overwhelmed—sometimes it is hard to believe that you actually care about the injustice and

suffering. When we don't see your work.  
When we sense the apathy from  
the church. When we feel small and  
forget that we were designed to be  
different and make things different.  
When we feel overwhelmed by darkness  
in the world—the violence, injustice,  
poverty, oppression, abuse.  
Give us hope not to be overcome.  
Give us eyes to see your goodness for  
our world. Give us the strength to hold

the pain of injustice in our world  
and faith that it will end.  
Give us courage to be honest  
with ourselves about why and how  
we are doing justice.  
We believe. So. Empower us to disrupt  
our broken thinking by learning truth from  
diverse leaders. Enable us to discover  
the beauty of justice and inspire action in  
others. Embolden us to display  
Your goodness in the world.

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