

# The Canticle

July 2020  
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Voice of  
The Community  
of St. Francis,  
Province of  
The Americas

## Shelter-in-Place

In the December 2018 issue of *The Canticle*, I focused on Winter Spirituality. I said Winter is the time of letting go, releasing, dying. It is a time of pulling in, of hunkering down around the fire as the chaos of weather blasts around us.

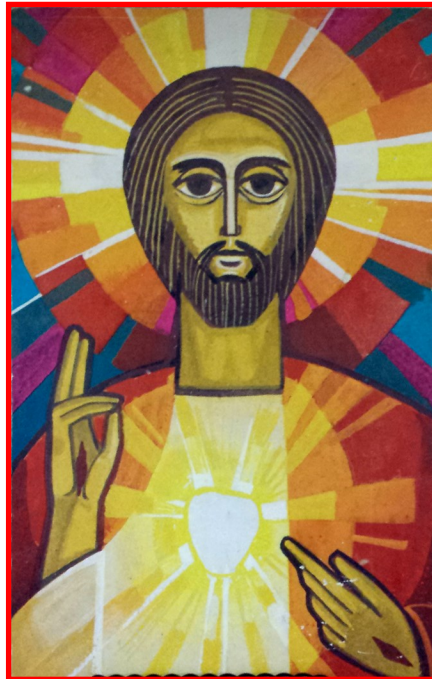
I never anticipated that now, in the midst of an abundant summer following a beautiful spring, we would still be living out a winter spirituality. But the Covid-19 Pandemic has brought this upon us.

But...***We're All in This Together, Right?***  
....except....

Lowering of pollution that first month—the air so crisp and clear and breathable. Everything stood out in beautiful colors. But during the same period the EPA eliminated safeguards for the environment.

The pandemic has starkly revealed the economic, racial and social inequalities of the status quo in the U.S. which make our country unhealthy, unjust and unstable. We have seen that People of Color and the poor have borne the brunt of the crisis: much higher rates of virus infection and morbidity as well as greater economic devastation. The Pandemic has laid bare the gross social inequities in our nation and the many things we have taken for granted which have failed us.

*Sojourners Magazine* calls this Kairos time—"a propitious moment for decision or action." Certainly we have seen an alarming escalation of hate crimes (especially targeting Asians). But we have also seen a broad shift in attitudes and perceptions around the nation. The new generation is choosing not to tolerate what has been accepted for too long by too many people. This is very



encouraging, but I must remind myself of the shortness of attention spans and the limits of bureaucratic imagination. Will our changing cultural consciousness have a real effect on laws, policies or practices of our flawed social structure?

The bottom line is: We cannot go back to "normal" because "normal" is what got us here.

A statement from URI (United Religions Initiative) regarding this moment of choice sums it up for us:

"We choose love. We choose compassion. We choose non-violence. We choose equality. And we choose to dedicate our lives to creating cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings."

For the past 18 weeks we have been dutifully Sheltering-in-Place, hardly leaving St. Francis House. Our convent is a refuge for us. But I am very aware that the real refuge in these times of crisis is the Sacred Heart of Jesus. That is where our safety lies. That is where renewal in the life of love, compassion and justice lies.

God of grace, you invite the despised,  
you touch the unclean,  
you lift the head  
of those who are brought low:  
give us that hope against all hope  
for a world transformed  
by your healing touch;  
through Jesus Christ, the mercy of God. Amen.  
(Steven Shakespeare, *Prayers for an Inclusive Church*)

Pamela Clare, CSF

## A Covid-19 Diary: Week 18 and Counting

March 16, 2020

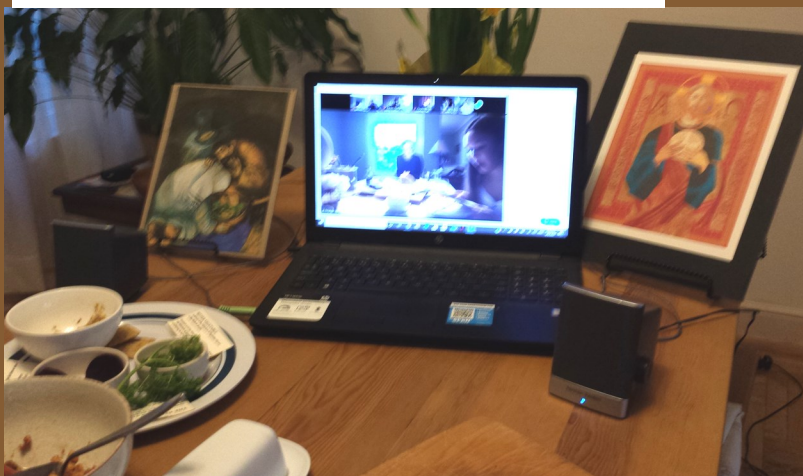
Due to the San Francisco Department of Public Health's order to shelter in place, we will be closed to clients for three weeks. We expect to reopen on April 7.

Maybe 2021



## Maundy Thursday on Zoom

As we gathered around our refectory table for the traditional meal, we tuned into the action at various households in the church.

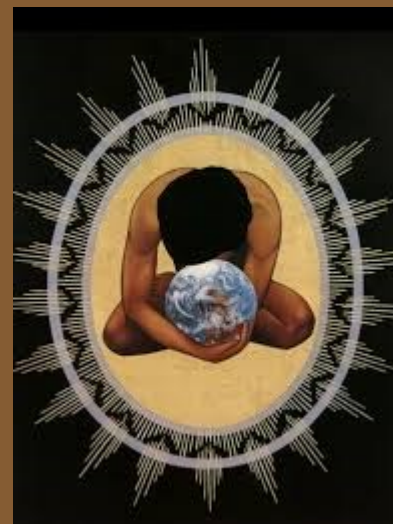


## Singing with a Mask!

Sr. Pamela Clare has had the privilege of being a member of the small group of people leading worship for Holy Innocents Episcopal Church during Holy Week, Easter and on Sundays thereafter. Luckily the acoustics are excellent and the people watching and listening online can't tell we are spread out.

## Cosmic Christ Icon

by Robert Lenz speaks to us of Compassion which is why we chose to have it in our chapel during this time of extreme distress for so many.



## Masks for the Maskless:

Jean has put her sewing skills to work making cloth masks for friends and for some of the over 8,000 people suffering homelessness in San Francisco.

Masks are a symbol of love and concern for each other since masks are worn primarily to protect others.





## Reaching Out to One Another

Once a week since the beginning of the Shelter-in-Place order, we have been finding a bunch of homegrown roses sitting on our doorstep. They are from the garden of two parishioners at Holy Innocents Church who very kindly remember us regularly with their gifts. In return, Sr. Jean leads them in a weekly Bible study via phone.

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

**PPE For  
Health Care  
Workers**

Since we are in the vulnerable category because of age, we have been confined to on-line advocacy regarding health equity, moral use of government money and racial justice. No shortage of opportunities. In June Sr. Pamela Clare took part in the virtual Poor People's Campaign. The online program was excellent, giving voice to a great diversity of people. The moral policy agenda to heal America the campaign came up with is beautifully comprehensive. Check out [www.poorpeoplescampaign.org](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org).



## Quirky homage to front-line workers

The 8 pm Howl. People lean out their windows or go into their back yards to clap, yell, howl like a wolf, yip like a coyote, and bang pots to say "thank you" to those who put their lives at risk to do health and safety work during this pandemic.

On April 25 all of San Francisco was invited to join Tony Bennett in singing "I left my heart in San Francisco," again to honor the front-line workers. The Sisters at St. Francis House and our next door neighbors (on the balcony above on the right) were among the folks all over the city who came outside at noon to sing our song.

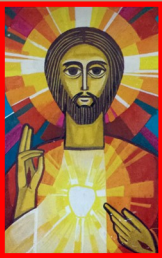


Srs. Jean and Maggie on a Spring outing to Golden Gate Park. We just HAD to GET OUT.

# *The Canticle*

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*The Canticle*  
is the newsletter of the  
Community of St.  
Francis, a religious  
order for women in the  
Franciscan tradition in  
the Episcopal Church.



## *Shelter-in Place*

**Our calendar remains blank  
with uncertainty...**

### **Companions in Franciscan Spirituality**

10-Day Immersion Programs have all been cancelled for 2020 due to the pandemic.

However, we hope to be able to come back in 2021 with our Immersions in Holy Week, July and during Francistide.

### **St. Francis House Guest Apartment**

Our Guest Ministry has been closed since March, but we are cautiously re-opening our Guest Apartment on a limited basis as of this month. The apartment is completely separate from the Convent and we will require guests to wear masks and observe social distancing protocols when interacting with the Sisters.

Meanwhile, we have taken this fallow time to refurbish the apartment—new paint, new window blinds, new curtains, and some new furniture.



**Guest Apartment freshly painted and awaiting  
delivery of new living room sofa and chair.**

*The Canticle—digital version*  
Send us your e-mail address!

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