|  |
| --- |
| **Can “Radical Jesus” Lead Us to a Better World?** |

**OCTOBER 15, 2019 BY**[**TOM RAPSAS**](https://www.patheos.com/blogs/wakeupcall/author/trapsas/)

**What’s your responsibility to the world?** **When you hear about the plight of refugees or the growing epidemic of homelessness or the rampant corruption of our political leaders, do you sit back and shrug your shoulders in dismay? Or do you step up and take action?**

If you’re like me, you fall into a category that might best be labeled “concerned but inactive.” I am alternately [angry](https://admin.patheos.com/blogs/wakeupcall/2018/01/3-steps-to-being-a-more-compassionate-person/), troubled, bewildered and angst-ridden by the state of our world circa October, 2019. But I have not taken any action, aside from contributing money to the causes I believe in. After reading Joan Chittister’s new book, ***The Time is Now***, that may change.

Chittister is an American Benedictine nun and author who, at the age of 83, is speaking out. *Loudly*. “Sister Joan” is demanding we do something to get out of the mess we find ourselves in. In her words, “**it is our moral and spiritual responsibility to make the world a better place**” for everyone in it. She tells us:

*Our world waits for you and me, for spiritual people everywhere—to refuse to be pawns in the destruction of a global world for the sake of national self-centeredness.*

**There’s a Role Model that Sister Joan Wants Us to Follow: Jesus.**

Sister Joan asks us to stop and consider what [**being spiritual**](https://admin.patheos.com/blogs/wakeupcall/2017/10/five-ways-to-stay-spiritually-vibrant-after-age-50/) really means. She points out **there was once a time when going to church was a measure of our spirituality**. Most people believed that perfect church attendance was all it took to be right in the eyes of God. **It wasn’t true then. It isn’t true now.** Sister Joan challenges us to “live as Jesus lived.” This is not the sanitized version of [**Jesus**](https://admin.patheos.com/blogs/wakeupcall/2019/07/jesus-on-finding-god/) that dwells in some churches and in popular culture. This is**radical Jesus**, the one who moves amongst all people, regardless of their age, race, sex or standing in life:

*Jesus moved with drunkards and sinners. He healed the outcast and the enemy. He gathered women as well as men to his side. He chastised leaders who overlooked the poor; he defied the doctrine of sexism that religions use to make male minsters superior. He stood up and in a clear voice declared wrong any policies, sacred or secular, that burdened the backs of the powerless and crushed the spirits of the poor*.

Chittister believes that [**Jesus**](https://admin.patheos.com/blogs/wakeupcall/2018/10/10-jesus-quotes-hidden-by-the-church-and-what-they-reveal/) wanted us to follow his lead, to stand up for the poor and disadvantaged, to speak out for those who have no voice, to take right action when we see or hear about acts that are spiritually and morally indefensible. **We cannot and should not remain silent.** She states:

*We often ignore, resist, reject the idea that, like Jesus, we have a role to play in righting a world whose axle is tilting in the wrong direction….****to follow Jesus means that we, too, must each do something to redeem our battered, beaten world****from the greed that smothers it.*

She reminds us that the while Jesus could be loving and kind, he had another side. This [**Jesus**](https://admin.patheos.com/blogs/wakeupcall/2018/08/6-jesus-quotes-that-will-offend-some/) challenged religious “authorities” and their antiquated views. This Jesus, when he sensed spiritual laws were being broken, upended the moneychangers’ tables.

*There is no room for maintaining the perfect spiritual routine, the antiseptic moral cleanliness…none of that marked the life of Jesus himself, who consorted with sinners, healed foreigners, called women to discipleship, contended with scribes about the nature of faith, and irritated the leaders of both religion and government*. “We have to be about something greater than ourselves.”

The quote above from Chittister is a reminder that we must sometimes fight our own [**complacency**](https://admin.patheos.com/blogs/wakeupcall/2017/11/aging-with-purpose/) and our belief there is nothing we can do. In her words, “**The work of God is in our hands.**To ignore that is to ignore the very fullness of life.”

It is up to us to “speak up and speak out”—or we risk our national and global crises going from bad to worse. Again, in her words:

*Those who risk nothing risk much more. While we keep our heads down, our mouths closed, our public reputations unblotted, thanks to the silence we keep in the face of great public issues of the day, the pillars of society erode around us. The Constitution flounders against the political ambitions of the very people pledged to protect it. The poor get even poorer. The middle class watches their retirement go to dust.*

In the words of Barack Obama, **we are the change we seek**. We are the ones who must lead, who must influence, who must participate, who must cajole, who must teach. Sister Joan asks all of us:

*Shall we do something to reshape the heart and soul of the world we inhabit? Or shall we do nothing and claim we are powerless? There are rallies to attend, students to teach,*[***peacemaking courses***](https://eileenflanagan.com/building-a-campaign/)*to take, public legislation to study and discuss, facilities and services to open to the homeless.****Will we raise no voice at all in the pursuit of God’s will for us all?***

**Upcoming Events**

* **November 14 Thursday 5:30 to 7 pm Community Supper -** Bring a friend! Don’t let food sensitivities keep you home – Each community supper has a gluten-free, dairy-free, and nut-free entrée for our special guests. Bring something canned or boxed for our local food pantry at St Vincent De Paul, and put it in the bin near our side entrance—and thank you.
* **November 9th  3:30pm Nashua Soup Kitchen** Meet in the church parking lot at 3:30 for carpooling to Nashua. We are usually back by 6:30 or 7pm. Share your love and energy in this outreach mission of our community. Contact Kathy Chapman, chapman.kathy@gmail.com or 878-4993 if you plan to go or need information. We welcome members of the community in this service mission.
* **November 16th 6:30 pm.** Living Room Coffee House. Sign up for open mic, for music, or poetry reading, share in the food offerings before the music starts at 7 pm. The feature group “Koda.” Kota is an acoustic music trio, focusing on the music of the 60s and 70s as well as finely crafted originals. Kota has been featured at several restaurants in the Monadnock area, at the Keene Music Festival, the Rhubarb Festival, Marlborough Madness, and several other venus. They also donate their time to perform at local assisted-living facilities and senior centers. See website for full information <https://thelivingroomcoffeehouse.wordpress.com/>
* **December 1 is the first Sunday of Advent** We will have a tree to decorate, and the lighting of the first Advent candle. And the waiting begins…

#### **Image result for god is still speaking**

* **Halbrooks family** is moving to Jaffrey! They have purchased a larger house with an in-law apartment so Beth’s mother and father can join them. They won’t be moving til mid-January, but we already miss them, just thinking about the move.
* **Curt Dunn** Curt is at the rehab center Courville, 44 West Webster Street in Manchester. Although he has trouble reading, he still loves cards, but of course, enjoys calls and visits even more. As with his many neighbors in Courville, his health is fragile, so don’t bring any germs with you! Courville phone is 647-5900
* **Be sure to meet:** Lisa and Brian Charbonneau, 130 Jeds Lane, Mason, NH 03048 878-1502. Welcome to Mason Church!
* **Susan and Jim Suokko** have moved to Leominster, MA. Their new address is: 50 Brooks Pond Rd, Apt 104, Leominster, MA 01453. Packing and unpacking is no one’s favorite activity, but settling in to a new place is something they have been looking forward to!
* **Gwen Whitbeck** had surgery 5 months ago to amputate her leg. This is a huge adjustment, as anyone can imagine. Check with Doug – dwhitbeck@hotmail.com – if you want to visit or call her. This month she has had further surgery on her other leg to help with the circulation. The Whitbecks have given so much to NH and the community in service – many thanks! Now let us help you.
* **Laila Washburn is still 100 years old!** Laila lives at Summer Hill Assisted Living in Peterborough. She loves company and cards. At 100, every day is treasured. Laila Washburn, Summer Hill, 183 Old Dublin Rd, Peterborough, NH 03458. Call ahead if you have questions. 603-924-6238
* **Gretchen and Wally Brown** Always in need of a little cheer, and Gretchen needs contact with the outside world, so stop by with a smile, a meal, or just to pick up syrup and say hello!

Cards to: 421 Meetinghouse Hill Rd, Mason, NH 03048 phone: 878-1481

* **Forty Family** Meredith and family are moving to Manhattan. We wish them well, and hope they will come home to Mason often.

**Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC) is in your neighborhood! Call: get a ride or get information about volunteering to be a driver.** (877) 428-2882 **Just an hour or two of your time per week, or even per month, can make a big difference in a person's life.**

When you volunteer to be a driver for CVTC — taking neighbors to nonemergency medical or social service appointments, the grocery store, banking, or pharmacy — you increase the health of the entire region, one person at a time. Volunteer drivers donate their time, at their availability, and can choose to be compensated for their mileage.

Community Volunteer Transportation Co. is a nonprofit providing no-fee rides for individuals without access to transportation due to age, ability, income, and/or life circumstance.

To give or get a ride, visit [cvtc-nh.org](http://cvtc-nh.org/) or call 1-877-428-2882, for more information. Thank you!