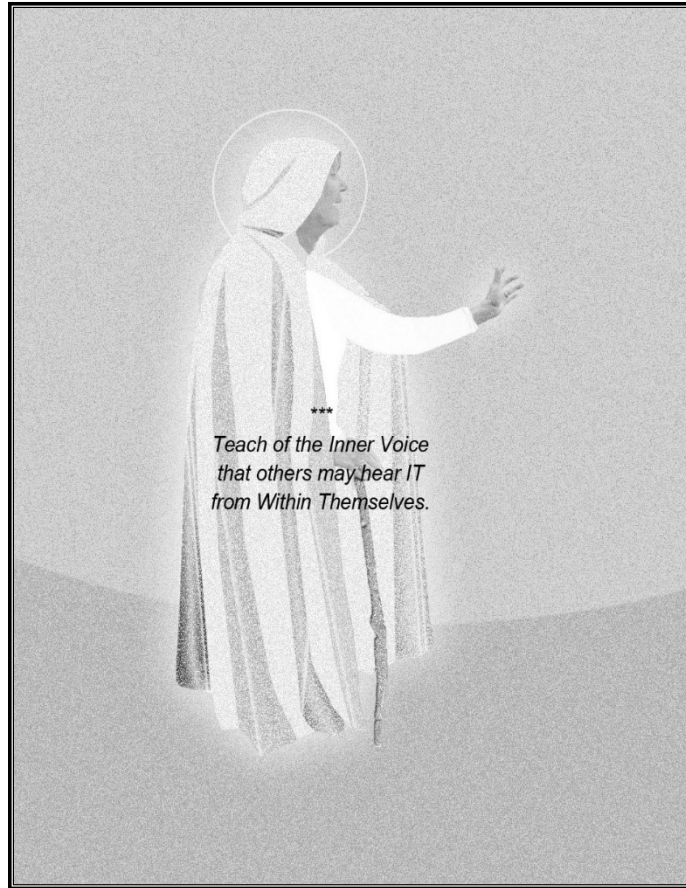


## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

March 20-26, 2020

### IN OUR OWN BACKYARD - Part 22



*Photo by Clarissa K. Conn from "Path of the Prophet"*

### HOW CAN SOMEONE WITHOUT SHELTER SELF-ISOLATE BY STAYING HOME?

**By Wanda Sue Parrott**

**PREDICTING** the fate of our community's unsheltered people is impossible, although my inner muse shared these guiding words from "Path of the Prophet" to encourage anyone terrified by the coronavirus, including myself:

*Fear, but fall not long in fearing. . .*

If I could, I'd reveal where our homeless neighbors will stay during the new 3-week Shelter-In-Place Order issued by Monterey County, but I don't know how someone without shelter can stay home!

The best I can offer is my muse's encouragement if you're affected, if not actually infected, as the pandemic spreads:

*Be, above all else, bold. . .*

Tuesday's Shelter-In-Place Order came on the heels of the President's 15-day call for nationwide "Social Distancing" on Monday to curb the spread of the pandemic COVID-19 virus he called "The Invisible Enemy," the first two cases of which were reported in Monterey County on St. Patrick's Day.

At 4:34 p.m., Tuesday, March 17, a robocall was recorded on my machine while I was practicing picnicking-to-avoid-panic by relaxing in peace at the beach and listening to uplifting thoughts of my own Inner Guide, known as one's Inner Prophet or, as I call mine, the Muse.

Wisdom of our own inner guides can help each of us endure troubling times. Mine says:

*Be bold enough to cry the tears of humanity...  
without drowning in the vast salt seas they create.*

### **Fish Over Fear**

The call came while I was munching a crisp fish takeout sandwich from the Carl's, Jr. drive-through while practicing the President's Social Distancing/Safe-Dining routine that lets fast foods places continue serving take-out meals to potentially lonely old ladies like me.

Portents of lockdown had sent panic-driven people shopping last weekend. Toilet paper, sanitizer and towels were snatched up. Shelves were stripped bare. I vowed not to be like them or fall victim to fear, greed or loneliness.

On Monday, the president had issued the national order that only groups of 10 or less should congregate at least 3 feet apart. Churches, restaurants, and other places people gather started closing.

By Tuesday, St. Patrick's Day, governors of individual states were calling the shots about how best to cooperate to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus (aka Coronavirus) nationwide.

Muse reminded me: *And dare to spread the light of the sunflower seeds and stars.*

California's governor, Gavin Newsom, gave authority to the counties to set rules, which is why I received the recording on Tuesday just as I was finishing my last French fry.

### **Monterey's Shelter-In-Place (Stay Home) Order**

Here's the message that greeted me:

*This is an informational message from the Monterey County Office of Emergency Services.*

*Monterey County is under a Shelter-In-Place Order.*

*This order shall become effective at 12:01 a.m. on March 18, 2020, and continue to be in effect until 11:59 p.m. on April 7, 2020, or until extended, rescinded, amended or ended in writing by order of the Health Services Officer.*

*This order does not affect essential health services, services that protect the health, safety and welfare of the community.*

*It also makes provision for our agricultural community's field workers who provide food for our tables and market, or provide other items. . ."*

### **A Community Effort**

No mention was made of the homeless, or where they're supposed to stay under the Shelter-In-Place Order that means "Stay home for the next three weeks," but Jim Johnson of the Monterey Herald was on top of it with his March 16 coverage, "Local plan for potential homeless coronavirus outbreak," at:

<https://www.montereyherald.com/2020/03/16/locals-plan-for-potential-homeless-coronavirus-outbreak/>

Esther Malkin posted this excellent piece on 11 important things to know about the coronavirus on Nextdoor:

<https://www.vox.com/2020/3/16/21181560/coronavirus-tips-symptoms-us-covid-19-testing-immunity-reinfection>

Also on Nextdoor, Susan Ragsdale-Cronin shared this inspirational free verse, presented here in excerpted narrative-poem format due to space limitation, posted March 13 by Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM:

### **We're All In This Together!**

*Lockdown. Yes, there is fear. Yes, there is isolation. Yes, there is panic buying.*

*Yes, there is sickness. Yes, there is even death. But, they say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise you can hear the birds again . . .*

*Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples are preparing to welcome and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary. All over the world people are looking at their neighbors in a new way.*

*All over the world people are waking up to a new reality. To Love.*

*Yes, there is sickness. But there does not have to be disease of the soul.*

*So we pray and we remember that, Yes, there is fear. But there does not have to be hate.*

*Yes, there is isolation. But there does not have to be loneliness.*

*Yes, there is panic buying. But there does not have to be meanness.*

*Yes, there is even death. But there can always be a rebirth.*

*The sky is clearing, Spring is coming. Open the windows of your soul and though you may not be able to touch across the empty square, Sing.*

And yes, Gathering for Women, One Starfish Safe Parking, and Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Programs (I-HELP) for both homeless men and women were still operating at press time.

And yes, your Inner Prophet will help you if you listen to the Still Small Voice within.

It's okay to be afraid, just don't wallow in fear too long!

We can get through this together, even if we must have three feet of space between us.

### ***May The Muse Be With You.***

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(Note: Seaside's Campus Town column has been delayed due to this week's breaking news.)

*Path of the Prophet* by Wanda Sue Childress-Parrott is a pocket-sized Books for Beds Publication, proceeds from which support production of this column to benefit the homeless of the Monterey Peninsula. Suggested minimum donation is \$5 per copy. If interested, email me at the address below for details.

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