



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 12, 2017

Readings

This week:

Sirach 15:15-20

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

Matthew 5:17-37

Next week:

Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18

1 Corinthians 3:16-23

Matthew 5:38-48

Psalm

Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord. (*Psalm 119*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Jack Izzo.

The Thomas Merton Center community worships and celebrates Sunday liturgy each week at the regularly scheduled 8:45 am parish Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church. Members of the Thomas Merton community plan these liturgies in the spirit of Vatican II and its call to "full, active and conscious participation" in Catholic liturgical life.

The Thomas Merton Center is supported by your donations. If you choose to donate by check or cash, every Sunday there is a donation basket in the back of church or by the coffeepot after Mass—or you can use the envelope in the bulletin the last Sunday of every month to mail your donation. Please do not put your TMC donation in the collection baskets passed during Mass (these are for parish contributions only).

Calendar

Monday, February 13, 7:00 pm

TMC Liturgy Team, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

Modern man believes he is fruitful and productive when his ego is aggressively affirmed, when he is visibly active, and when his action produces obvious results. But this activity is more and more filled with self-contradiction. The richest and most scientific culture in the world. . . is expending its huge force and wealth not on fruitfulness, but on instruments of destruction. Even though mankind sincerely desires peace, this desire is only an illusion which cannot find fulfillment. Such people live in perpetual self-defeat.

. . . Solitude is the very ground of ordinary life. It is the very ground of that simple, unpretentious, fully human activity by which we quietly earn our daily living and share our experiences with a few intimate friends. But we must learn to know and accept this ground of our being. . . It is in solitude that illusions finally dissolve. . . He who is truly alone finds in himself the heart of compassion. . .

—*Love and Living*

The Thomas Merton Center for Catholic Spiritual Development, P.O. Box 60061, Palo Alto, California 94306, was founded by a group of Roman Catholic lay persons in 1995, and incorporated in 1996, to offer Catholic liturgy; to augment, support and lead the development of ecumenical spirituality; and to foster new ways for Catholics and other Christians to develop a deeper spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ and, through him, with God. From its Catholic roots, it seeks to join with members of other faiths, Christian and non-Christian, to support religious education and spiritual development.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

February is Black History Month:

Abridged from an article by Leonard E. Colvin at thenewjournalandguide.com.

[This month is Black History Month, and in 2017 the theme for the month is “Crisis in Black Education.”] In 2019 the nation will observe the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first “20 and odd Blacks” who arrived in the English Colony of Jamestown, beginning their journey as citizens in the now United States of America. From indentured servants to enslaved people who were freed to exist under Jim Crow oppression, to today’s less obvious barriers, the evolution of Blacks has been colored by both progress and retreat from the idea of full equality.

That evolution to where they stand today has been a social, economic, political, cultural and spiritual one. But to secure and sustain it, legal and institutional barriers met them as they took each step forward. Learning to read meant brutal punishment or death for slaves. Educational prohibition was a barrier to assure their ignorance, bondage deter their efforts to strive for freedom. After the Civil War, former slaves founded churches, raised families, formed communities, established businesses and developed their own cultural view of the world as free people. But that was met with indifference, or more often with violence [and] obstruction with guns. Codes were enacted to marginalize and block their advances, and keep Blacks segregated from Whites socially, academically and physically.

Today, almost 400 years after the first Blacks arrived in this country, disturbing disparities still exist though great advances have been made in education, including colleges and universities founded by Blacks to educate their community. Crippling poverty, illiteracy, incarceration, violence, social and economic isolation place many Black people living in rural and urban centers in a state of affairs little better than their forefathers who were enslaved or hampered by Jim Crow segregation.

“The Crisis in Black Education,” the African-American History Month theme for 2017, hopes to focus on the crucial role of education in the history of African-Americans. Thus, the nation is asked to look at the aspects of Black education which can be held up as a source of celebration and example of contributing to

continued on page 4

Lenten prayer groups being formed:

Helen Baumann and Vicki Sullivan are starting small prayer groups of 6-10 people to meet before our Mass during Lent and “break open” the scripture readings for that day. This is not to be Bible study or a theological/intellectual exercise; rather, it is meant to be a means of getting to know Christ better and for forming closer spiritual friendships.



If you are interested in learning more or in signing up, Helen and

Vicki will be available after Mass in the Thomas House, or you can contact Helen at hbaumann@aol.com or Vicki at vickisullivan@comcast.net.

Let congress know your feelings:

Consider calling your Senators and Congressperson in Washington to state your opposition to Trump’s executive orders and actions on:

- discriminatory ban on Muslims,
- building a wall with Mexico,
- banning Syrian refugees,
- severe changes in immigration enforcement,
- threats to the Affordable Care Act,
- removing environmental protections,
- and other issues as they arise.

Your call does make a difference! You can find more information and a sample script for your calls at <http://www.multifaithpeace.org>.

Talk on racial justice:

The Bannan Institute program for Winter 2017 at Santa Clara University has as its theme “Racial and Ethnic Justice and the Common Good.” On February 15 at 4:00 pm, Associate Professor Vincent Lloyd from the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University, will talk on *Racial Justice, Theologically*. The talk is in the St. Clare Room of the Library and Learning Commons, and it is open to the public.

Please remember in your prayers this week: Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Sr. Fran Ciluaga, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Dick Jackman, François Jamati, Michael Kiriti, Hunter Kubit, Fr. Lavagetto’s mother, Deacon Ysidro and Dolores Madrigal, Mary Rose McGuire, Maureen Mooney, Hayden Pastorini, Paul Prochaska, Anne Rush, Priya Smith, Bernice Sullivan, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, Kay Williams, and T.J. Wooten.

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Sr. Simone Campbell on refugee ban:

An interview with Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, executive director of the NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, about President Trump's latest batch of executive orders, from www.bustedhalo.com.

... On the subject of the president's divisive executive order on immigration and refugees, Sister Simone points out how important it is to clarify the distinction between refugee policy and policy designed to curb undocumented immigrants. The term refugee itself is not simply used to describe anyone leaving one country and trying to enter another. A refugee is "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence and has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group." Any refugee attempting to enter the United States—all of whom are now prevented by the president's executive order for 120 days—has already gone through an extensive vetting process that lasts on average 18 to 30 months. In fact, even the "temporary" 120-day time frame is significant. Once the aforementioned vetting process is complete, a refugee is issued a travel "voucher" to enter our country, which is good for 90 days. If travel is not completed in that time, the refugee and the family must begin all over and perhaps wait another two years before being granted refugee status. Therefore, those who dismiss the current executive order as "only temporary" are failing to see the drastic implications of the 120-day ban

While many Americans are fearful of refugees as potential terrorists, Sister Simone points out that this fear may be baseless. According to a 2016 study by the Cato Institute, the chance of an American being murdered in a terrorist attack caused by a refugee is 1 in 3.64 billion per year while the chance of being murdered in an attack committed by an illegal immigrant is an astronomical 1 in 10.9 billion per year. Sister Simone surmises that the executive order is, in fact, meant to play on people's fears as opposed to actually promoting security.

"This isn't really about terrorism, it's about breeding fear in our society," Sister Simone said. "And I can understand how people who don't know the details of this could be afraid. But quite frankly, this is where the scriptures become so important. Because one of the things that Jesus said most often was, 'Fear not,

Acting out of love and listening: a radical response for our troubled times:

By Sister Simone Campbell.

I have been challenged by the new Trump administration to find the right place for Network in our effort to create an economy of inclusion. Part of me wants to resist every move, every nomination, every tweet, every lie, and every outrageous utterance. But I know that such absolute resistance, such "fighting against," will reinforce the very behavior that I am resisting. It will lead to hate



countering hate, and it won't work. What is called for is something new. Both before and after the election, I talked with some ardent Trump supporters to try to understand them. What I have come to see is that for many, if not most, their support for Mr. Trump comes from the fact that they feel betrayed by politicians and frightened for their children. They

feel they have "worked hard and played by the rules" but not gotten ahead. They are struggling just as their parents did, or maybe things are even a little harder for them. Beneath their disappointment, I have come to see that there is shame for them in not living up to their expectations.

This shame leads to anger directed at "business as usual." They don't care that Mr. Trump lacks any political experience. In fact, they like that because they feel betrayed by politicians. What they are not seeing is that it is conservative policies of "trickle-down" economics that are at the heart of our ever-growing income and wealth disparity. Some of these shamed and angry voters have supported these policies for years, but do not understand that they privilege the top economic brackets and actually hurt everyone else. I am tempted at times to just "shake them" to try to get them to wake up to the consequences of their choices.

We are challenged by the Gospel, however, to do this work differently. We are challenged to fight for a vision of who we are called to be in our nation and our world. To create this vision we need to enter into a contemplative space where we let our guard down and listen to the Spirit (or what I call the wee small voice within) and then act out of that centered space.

This deep listening is risky business because it often calls on each of us to change in some way. It isn't just about how "they" need to change. We need to say to ourselves

Black History Month, continued:

Black progress. . . .

Regularly, a study on the state of Black education, is released. Despite the successes in the educational attainments of Black children, the disparities and their causes are hard to overlook. "Race For Results," a report from The Annie E. Casey Foundation, which works to build better families, notes that while no group perfectly meets every milestone, Asian-Americans fare the best and African-Americans do the worst. "From birth, the average Black child in America is at a relative disadvantage," citing that 92% of white, Latino, American-Indian and Asian and Pacific Islander babies are born at normal birth weight: for African-Americans, this only reaches into the high-80s. . . .

The report included information from a recent study from the U.S. Department of Education stating that minority students, especially Blacks, are the targets of harsher discipline and less access to the best teachers than their White peers. "Too often, the resources of public systems serving children and families are spent on programs that lack evidence and without input from the families and communities they are intended to serve," the report says. "The kids of color in our country are absolutely critical to the future success of the United States," Speer said. "They are going to be the majority of our work force and we can't afford to lose the talent they have and could have in the future. We need them to be successful."

Sr. Simone Campbell on refugee ban, continued:

fear not.' Our security is not in weapons, not in walls, not in isolation. Our security is in community. In connecting with each other. That's what Jesus taught—to love one another as Christ loved us. Christ gave his life for us, so the least we can do is make room for people who are fleeing in fear."

Sister Simone also shares her thoughts on the proposed repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), colloquially known as Obamacare, and her experience participating in the Women's March on Washington. Sister Simone was an early advocate for the ACA and was present when it was signed into law by President Obama in 2010. Sister Simone echoes the concerns expressed by many Catholic bishops in recent weeks about the consequences of repealing the law without a replacement already in place. "That's part of a pro-life stance—that health care is a right," Sister Simone said. "It's not a luxury to those who are rich. It should be available to all of us. And we are the only developed nation on earth that has not figured out how to get health care to all our people. So, we've got work to do."

Acting out of love and listening, continued:

that it is okay to be nervous about silence and listening, but we can't let our reticence stop us. It is this very deep contemplation that is desperately needed in our nation right now.

I've discovered that this deep listening leaves me open to hear the stories of others [and] grasp the reality around me in new ways, for example, my story of listening to Trump voters. It also allowed me to understand what Thomasina in Indianapolis meant when she told me she wasn't going to vote because she didn't want to hurt our country. She didn't know how to choose when all she heard was negativity about both candidates and thought her only ethical choice was not voting at all! Deep listen-



ing lets me take in another's experience and understand it in a new way. It is the first building block of community that we are in dire need of in our nation.

So in my worry and terror about the policies that we are going to be advocating against over the next four years, I believe we are being called to a new level of engagement and action. Only love can cast out hate. We need to listen deeply and then act in love. Hard as it will be, we are called to take a radical step into the deep listening that can reveal the new. It feels like groping in the dark in very challenging times, but my experience over and over is that we are not left orphans. The words are given when they are needed. Community is nourished in this very struggle. We learned from the Vatican censure [of American women religious] that despite pain and fear, staying faithful to our mission allows the Spirit to make something new.

Let us begin to advocate strongly together, but also begin a time of "deep listening." Let us share with each other what we hear. Then we are prepared to lift up a vision of the 100% where all can work together to heal our nation. For such a challenging time we have been called. Let us respond as the prophet did: *Speak O Holy One, your servants are listening.*

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