



Second Sunday of Lent

March 12, 2017

Readings

This week:

Genesis 12:1-4a

2 Timothy 1:8b-10

Matthew 17:1-9

Next week:

Exodus 17:3-7

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

John 4:5-42

Psalm

Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you. (*Psalm 33*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. George Aranha.

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).

Daylight Savings
Time
began last night!

Calendar

Monday, March 13, 7:00 pm

Liturgy Committee, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

The purpose of Lent is not only expiation, to satisfy the divine justice, but above all a preparation to rejoice in His love. And this preparation consists in receiving the gift of His mercy—a gift which we receive insofar as we open our hearts to it, casting out what cannot remain in the same room with mercy.

Now one of the things we must cast out first of all is fear. Fear narrows the little entrance to our heart. It shrinks up our capacity to love. It freezes up our power to give ourselves. If we were terrified of God as an inexorable judge, we would not confidently await His mercy, or approach Him trustfully in prayer. Our peace and our joy in Lent are a guarantee of grace.

—*Thoughts in Solitude*

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 NOTES

News Announcements Requests

Opportunities to support Seton school:

As we learned at Mass last Sunday, 88% of the children at Seton school need financial support to be able to go to school there. The school's primary fundraiser is the annual golf tournament at Stanford's golf course, on Monday, May 8. You don't have to play golf to support the school at this event. There is a silent auction after the tournament, and the school is collecting donations now, to be auctioned on May 8.

These can be old or new treasures from your closet, or a trip or a stay in your Sierra cabin, etc. All proceeds from the golf tournament and auction event benefit the St. Elizabeth Seton Scholarship Fund. Contact the Seton office at tbarragan@setonpaloalto.org, or call (650) 326-9004.

Also, we are collecting new books for summer reading for the students in 2nd grade. Your generosity in past years has provided a package of 5-7 books for each student to keep and enjoy at home during summer vacation. New books can be left in the vestibule this Sunday or next. You can also make a cash donation and we'll shop for you.

Peninsula food runners:

Peninsula Food Runners is a volunteer organization that picks up excess perishable and prepared foods from participating donors (restaurants, cafeterias, etc.) and delivers them directly to recipients (shelters, day centers for the elderly, boys and girls clubs, etc.). They are in urgent need of drivers in the Palo Alto area. The surplus food is there, but they have too few drivers to transport it to local nonprofits that feed the hungry.

Shifts normally take less than 90 minutes and can work around your schedule. If you can help, go to www.peninsulafoodrunners.org and register under Volunteer sign-up. Or e-mail Molly Rhine at m.rhine@comcast.net or call her at (408) 396-8705.

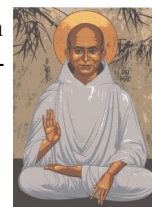


March means membership in TMC:

Thomas Merton Center membership materials have been sent to all current members. If you would like to join us, a membership application form is available in the church vestibule, or ask Kay Williams after Mass.

TMC is a membership-based nonprofit religious education organization required in its by-laws to register its membership annually. Membership fees are minimal—\$15 per individual or \$30 per family.

Your decision to join us shows your support for sustaining this 8:45 Sunday Mass, as well as the adult spiritual education programs and a monthly donation to St. Elizabeth Seton School in Palo Alto. Contact Kay for more information at (650) 270-4188.



Hotel de Zink sign-ups in March:

Our parish will be taking meals to the homeless shelter, Hotel de Zink, from April 1st to April 15th. You can still sign up to bring a meal, with Ruth Chippendale outside after Mass. If you miss her after Mass, and would like to bring a meal, give her a call at (650) 856-6350.

Flu season restrictions:

During the flu season, the diocese has asked us to please refrain from holding hands during the Our Father, and at the Sign of Peace, just bow to each other (no shaking hands either). During this season, there will be no communion cup as well.

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 FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Can Catholics celebrate the Reformation?:

By Jacob Kohlhaas, February 24, 2017, at uscatholic.org. Kohlhaas is an assistant professor of moral theology at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa.

On October 31, 2016, the same day Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church door in 1517, the Lutheran World Federation began a year-long commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. To recognize the

continued on page 3

. . . *Reformation, continued:*

Lutheran Church and to affirm the Catholic Church's continuing resolve to seek full Christian unity, Pope Francis participated in a Lutheran-Catholic liturgy in Lund, Sweden. . . . Among Catholics, Martin Luther has long suffered a negative reputation for fracturing the unity of the western church, while mainline Protestants historically have tended to view the Reformation as fundamentally positive. Today, however, many Protestant denominations recognize the tragic dimensions of the Reformation as well. Consequently, unambiguous language of *celebration* or *jubilee* was discouraged during preparations for the 500th anniversary; *commemoration* is the word of choice. If Protestants can accept mourning as part of the Reformation's legacy, might Catholics accept celebration as an aspect as well?



Despite its reputation, the Reformation did not divide the unity of the Catholic Church. The late-medieval western church was diverse and already internally divided in significant ways well before the Reformation. . . . Schools competed and religious orders clashed (often to the point of violence), the western schism divided loyalties and conceptions of authority, and support for Roman centralization conflicted with local autonomy and diversity of practice in Spain, France, Bavaria, and beyond.

By the 16th century, theologians and religious scholars had already leveled several significant critiques of medieval Christianity. The Council of Trent, called in response to the Reformation decades later, initiated the Catholic Counter-Reformation by unifying Catholicism and ordering Catholic practice. . . . But in reality, the Reformation both precipitated the end of medieval Christendom and sparked reforms that are foundational to modern Catholicism. The Reformation is also the source of religious identity for many mainline Protestant communions. In the 20th century, the ecumenical vision of the Catholic Church changed: Protestants are no longer regarded as separatists but instead as fellow Christians who are signs of God's active grace. Present Catholic ecumenical efforts seek to discover God's grace among Christian traditions while moving toward unity through mutual understanding.

The Catholic-Lutheran dialogue has recently produced notable documents, while monumental questions of shared communion and structural unity await serious discussion. At this historical moment, it seems, celebrating the faith incarnate in fellow Christians and mourning the divisions within Christianity are not incompatible, rather both are products of seeking unity and understanding within a divided Christianity.

A crisis of prosperity:

Subtitled "Could Small Again Be Beautiful?" Abridged from an article by Fr. Richard Rohr at spiritualprogressives.org. Fr. Rohr is a Franciscan priest of the New Mexico Province and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque. For more information visit www.cacradicalgrace.org.

A friend cleverly called what we are facing "a crisis of prosperity." Compared to most humans who have ever lived on this planet, most of us Americans are still quite comfortable, quite secure, and quite healthy—even amazingly so. But the world view that formed most of us for the last forty years was one where there were no limits to our growth, our achievement, and the earth's resources. We now and suddenly know better. It is a shock that is still sinking in slowly and with great resistance. Things that were luxuries for even kings and queens throughout most of history have become commonplace for most of us in developed countries. Easy availability soon became expectation, then eventually habituation, and finally entitlement. Wasn't life always this way? we came to imagine. Isn't this the way it is supposed to be? we assumed. It is surely hard to go backward once you have taken something for granted and it has become the norm.

Most humans since the beginnings of humanity have lived with a clear sense of limits. Scarcity has been part of the deal. Somehow there was wisdom and enforced maturity by living inside of boundaries. Small was the norm. It also made many people security-obsessed and driven toward violence and control, with no time left for art, literature, leisure, higher education, or even the daily skills of communication and relationship. It kept many in history from the fullness of their own humanity, less capable of love and union with others, with themselves, with creation, and with God. I think we can say that God's plan was surely not penury, nor were human lives supposed to be "nasty, brutish, and short" as Thomas Hobbes complained. Yet many lives have been exactly that.

We swung to the other extreme and created a prosperity gospel, a religion of "Cadillac faith," and limousine liberals (and conservatives!) who saw no conflict between the Gospel and amassing huge personal fortunes for their private lifestyles, despite the rather clear warnings of Jesus and the prophets against precisely that. . . . We have compartmentalized and denied these clear teachings for so many centuries that our resistance and denial are strongly in place. We just cannot hear what we cannot hear. Our ears are stopped and dulled, as Isaiah predicted (6:10).

In the last forty years, it became possible to be easily "rich," and so it soon felt ethical to be rich, even in the presence of so much poverty, oppression, and even des-

A crisis of prosperity, continued:

peration on this earth. Again, the rich man is ignoring Lazarus (Luke 16), as if Christians had never read the story.

Most of human history connected money with actual work, effort, and sacrifice. For the first time in human history, on a very broad scale, money and success became associated with money and success themselves. Financial incest spread, but this incest was unrecognized as abuse. Where were the watchmen that Ezekiel (33:6) said were necessary and obligated? The making of money was itself the work and even the most admired and envied work by many! Let's be honest, on some level many, if not most, of us believe that "greed is good." In our form, it is called capitalism.

Yet I would say that our real failure is not so much greed (although it is that, too) as self sufficiency, arrogance, and superficiality. Inner depth, compassion, and community died in many of us. We might call the thing that died a capacity for simple presence—presence to ourselves, to others, to the moment, and to inherent joy. That is the death of the soul for sure, and eventually of society. Surely this is a moment of invitation, for a very new framing, for utterly new possibilities. . . . We need to imagine our world, our economies, and our lifestyles in whole new ways. How can we get back to the way it was in recent years? . . . How can we restore the wealthy, the banks, and the corporations, so their largesse can again trickle down to us? These questions show the spiritless and sad way in which we have not-imagined a better world.

We surely cannot imagine Moses, the prophets, or Jesus thinking in such a way. They moved toward the crowds, the common good, not the protection of elites. Now, by some strange legerdemain, we dismiss this program as "socialism," with believers themselves some of the major dismissers. It is so ironic that we must protect the bonus contracts of executives as "legally binding," and yet the contracts of the ordinary worker can be easily dropped for the "survival" of the corporation. We are back into the divine rights of kings, and dare to call it democracy or free market, or even capitalism. It is "big government" protecting big government. One wonders and hopes if this crisis of prosperity cannot return us to a readmiration of smallness? Is it possible that we could join E.F. Schumacher's shout and plea that "small is beautiful"? I trust, I believe, I hope, and I even know that the New Imaginers are out there! This crisis of prosperity is an opportunity to again love the small, the local, the human scale, the human over the corporate, the soulful over the successful, and the common good over private advantage. This alone will offer us a future worthy of spiritual and wise human beings.

Fr. Percell's "eight steps for a happy, satisfied, and joyful life":

Last Sunday in his sermon, Fr. Percell invited us to see Lent not as a time of gloom, but as a time of joy. He spoke about the "eight steps for a happy, satisfied, and joyful life," and provided handouts listing the eight steps. But if you didn't get a copy, here they are:

1. **Count your blessings** (keep a gratitude journal)
2. **Practice acts of kindness** (both random and systematic)
3. **Savor life's joys** (momentary pleasures—sweetness of a ripe strawberry)
4. **Thank a mentor** (someone who guided you at one of life's crossroads)
5. **Learn to forgive** (letting go of anger and resentment allows us to move on)
6. **Invest time and energy in friends and family** ("Where we spend our time is where we spend our lives; and where we spend our lives is where we spend our love." —Clayton Barbeau)
7. **Take care of your body** (exercise, eat right, sleep and laugh; what if we fasted from food that isn't good for us?)
8. **Develop strategies for coping with stress and hardships** (faith, prayer)

March is Women's History Month:

Gender-based violence affects women of every national, belief, class, race and ethnic group. It is silenced by custom, institutionalized into laws and state systems, and passed from one generation to the next. The facts about gender-based violence:

- An estimated 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence. Some studies show this figure reaching up to 70% of women.
 - Approximately 200 million girls in 30 countries have suffered female genital mutilation or cutting.
 - Millions of women and girls are caught in modern-day slavery. Women represent 55% of the estimated 29.8 million victims of forced labor worldwide and 98% of the estimated 4.5 million forced into sexual exploitation.
 - In the United States, recent surveys have found that one in three women between the ages of 18 and 34 has been sexually harassed at work and 65% of women have experienced street harassment.
 - One in four men surveyed for a 2013 UN study in Asia and the Pacific admitted raping at least one woman.
 - More than 700 million women today were married as children (under 18), and some 33% were married before age 15.
- Education for Justice

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Kay Williams (March 26), 679-9015

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Hospitality: Jim Davis, 328-2584

Liturgy: John Arnold, 325-1421, jsaoso@comcast.net;

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Needs Net: Roberta Kehret, 494-1488, robkehr@yahoo.com

Spiritual Education: Mary Coady, 261-9155, Jim Davis, 328-2584