



Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

April 16, 2017

Readings

This week:

Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37–43

Colossians 3:1–4

John 20:1–9

Next week:

Acts of the Apostles 2:42–47

1 Peter 1:3–9

John 20:19–31

Psalm

This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad. (*Psalm 118*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Kevin Ballard, S.J.

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, Waverley and Homer Streets, Palo Alto. Members of the Thomas Merton community participate in planning 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, there are return envelopes in the bulletin on the last Sunday of each month for your convenience (donations by check or cash are welcome). The donation basket is in the back of church after Mass or available by the coffeepot after Mass—or you can use the envelope to mail your donation. **Please do not put your TMC envelope in the collection baskets passed during Mass (these are for parish contributions only).**

Calendar

Mnonday, April 17, 7:00 p.m. TMC Spiritual Education, Thomas House Library
Thursday, April 20, 7:30 p.m. TMC Board, Thomas House (rescheduled from 4/13)

From Thomas Merton

When the holy women arrived at the tomb, they found the stone was rolled away. But the fact that the stone was rolled away made little difference, since the body of Jesus was not there anyway. The Lord had risen. So too with us. We create obscure religious problems for ourselves, trying desperately to break through to a dead Christ behind a tombstone. Such problems are absurd. Even if we could roll away the stone, we would not find his body *because he is not dead*.

He is not an inert object, not a lifeless thing, not a piece of property, not a super-religious heirloom: HE IS NOT THERE. HE IS RISEN.

—*He Is Risen*

COMMUNITY NOTES

News Announcements Requests

22nd Annual Seton Scramble for Students:



You're invited! Please join us for our annual fundraising event at the exclusive Stanford Golf Course on **Monday, May 8th, 2017**. A full day of golf that includes Hobee's breakfast, boxed-lunch, a Coupa

Cafe catered reception with wine, beer and beverages throughout the day! Your day of golf will be followed by a fun reception and lively auction.

Come and support St. Elizabeth Seton School students and get the opportunity to play golf at Stanford too!

Registration at www.setonpaloalto.org

Questions? Contact Carmel Caligaris:

Development@setonpaloalto.org, 650-326-1258.

"Understanding Islam" series:

Tuesday, May 9th: Fear of a Faith: Sharia. Surveillance. Terrorism. The Muslim Ban. What's real, and what's not?

A discussion of the policies, politics, and current events that affect U.S. understandings of Islam and Muslims. Moderator: Co. Supervisor **Joe Simitian**. Panelists: **Ameena Jandali**, Islamic Networks Group and **Jihad Turk**, President of Bayan Claremont Islamic Graduate School

Monday, May 22nd: Women and Islam.

A discussion of what it means to be a Muslim woman, and how Islam intersects with gender in today's world. Moderator: Co. Supervisor **Joe Simitian**. Panelists: **Sumbul Ali-Karamali**, author, The Muslim Next Door, and **Maha Elgenaidi**, Executive Director, Islamic Networks Group

Both panels will be from 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm in the Embarcadero Room at the Rinconada Library, at 1213 Newell Road in Palo Alto. Both events are free, please RSVP at <http://www.commonwealthclub.org/sv> or call 408-299-5050.

Bulletin submissions must be e-mailed by Thursday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm. Kay, kaywill@pacbell.net, (650) 270-4188. Michelle, myhogan@comcast.net, (650) 493-8452.

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Sr. Fran Ciluaga, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Hunter Kubit, Dick Jackman, Edna and François Jamati, Alicia Kot, Fr. Bill Leininger, Andre and Alyssa Lippard, 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. [Add or subtract names by e-mailing Bulletin editors: Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams. See listings in adjacent column.]

TMC Annual Meeting May 7:

All TMC members are cordially invited to attend the Annual Meeting of the **Thomas Merton Center** and brunch on **Sunday, May 7, 2016, 11:00 a.m. till 1:00 p.m.**, at the home of Bob and Judy Foley, 1927 Emerson Street, Palo Alto.



We will share our vision for our TMC community as we move forward. We will also continue to seek guidance from the membership on issues for action by TMC in 2017-2018.

We will be paying attention in particular to reports and recognition of the past year's accomplishments in the TMC community and give a grand thank -you to Judy Creek for more than 20 years of service to TMC as bookkeeper.

Please mark your calendar. Members will receive an invitation and ballot by mail or email and are requested to return the R.S.V.P. form before May 7.

Not a TMC member yet? Look for membership forms in St. Catherine's Corner (the nook outside the church restroom), or contact Kay Williams, Membership, at kaywill@pacbell.net, or call 650-270-4188.

TMC bulletins online:

The TMC website awaits your perusal. Go to **www.thomasmerton.org** to find copies of the Sunday TMC bulletins, notices of events, and background on the Merton Center. Web master Jim Davis awaits your submissions: email them to jim_davis@pacbell.net.

April 18: the science of climate change:

Everyone is invited to a talk by scientist Andrew Gunther at the Our Lady of the Rosary Hall on April 18 from 7:30 to 9 PM. The presentation focuses on the science of climate change and why immediate action is required.

Our speaker, Andrew Gunther, PhD serves on the Advisory Board of Interfaith Power & Light.

—Sponsored by the STA Parish Green Committee

Board: Vicki Sullivan, vickisullivan@comcast.net, (650) 327-5339
Bulletin: Kay Williams (April 16, May 7) kaywill@pacbell.net
Michelle Hogan (April 23 & 30) myhogan@comcast.net
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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

United Airlines: customer service or the morality of capitalism?

[By Fr. James Martin, S.J., in *America Magazine*, 4/11/17. Martin is editor-at-large at America and the author of *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*.]

Here is why United Airlines kicking off and countenancing the assault of a paying customer is a big deal: It helps to reveal how corporate America often puts rules before people and how capitalism often places profits before human dignity. (I am speaking not only as a Jesuit priest but as a graduate of the Wharton School of Business, someone who considers himself a capitalist and a veteran of several years in corporate America.)

Overbooking is a device that most airlines use to maximize their profits. Unfilled seats mean lost revenue. This means that some people will inevitably be bumped from flights. But in the airline's economic calculus, this is deemed an acceptable trade-off. A customer's inconvenience is subordinate to profits.

You can already see the inherent problem.

The man had purchased a ticket from United, so, as a consumer, he was justified in expecting that he would be able to use it. That is the essence of capitalism: a fair exchange of money for goods or services. But the airline decided they had "overbooked" when some airline employees needed last-minute seats on the flight, so they asked passengers (who had already paid) if they would be willing to relinquish their seats. They offered increasing levels of money to make it more palatable. Several took the offer.

Not surprisingly, one person did not want to leave. Why should he? He paid for his seat and was anxious to reach his destination. The airline had also entered into a contract with him. And the argument that the airline had the right to eject him is, to me, fallacious. It was not any sort of emergency. No matter what the fine print said, the man had a right to expect to fly that day.

Likewise, the argument that overbooking reduces the price of tickets, and therefore actually helps the consumer, is also something of a dodge, because the goal of the corporation is not to reduce the price of tickets but to maximize profits for shareholders. One reduces ticket prices to increase volume, which raises revenue. Airlines are not charities.

When the man was unwilling to give up what he had paid for, he was forcibly removed from his seat by security officers, who ended up bloodying him and dragging him along the floor of the plane.

When we watch the video of the event something in us says, "That's not right." Pay attention to that feeling. It is our conscience speaking. That is what prompted the

widespread outrage online—not simply the fact that people who have been bumped from flights share in the man's frustration but the immorality of a system that leads to a degradation of human dignity. If corporate rules and the laws of capitalism lead to this, then they are unjust rules and laws. The ends show that the means are not justified.

Someone in authority—pilots, stewards, ground crew—might have realized that this was an assault on a person's dignity. But no one stopped it. Why not? Not because they are bad people: They too probably looked on in horror. But because they have been conditioned to follow the rules.

Those rules said: First, we may sometimes overbook because we want to maximize our profits. Second, we can eject someone because we have overbooked, or if we decide that we want those seats back, no matter what a person can reasonably expect, and no matter how much of an inconvenience this is. And third, and most tragically, human dignity will not get in the way of the rules. A toxic cocktail of capitalism and corporate culture led to a man being dragged along the floor.

That is why bland "nothing to see here" defenses of the ills of corporate America and of the dictates of capitalism bother this capitalist and former corporate employee so much. They fail to see the victims of the system.

Is this a "first-world problem"? Yes, of course. Most people in the developing world could not afford a ticket on that flight. But it is very much a "world problem" because the victims of a system that places profits before all else are everywhere. The same economic calculus that says profits are the most important metric in decision-making leads to victims being dragged along the floor of an airplane and eking out an existence on the floor of a hovel in the slums of Nairobi.

The privileging of profits over people leads to unjust wages, poor working conditions, the degradation of the environment and assaults on human dignity.

A day after the incident, Oscar Munoz, United's chief executive, apologized for the treatment of the passenger, saying that "no one should ever be treated that way."

Agreed.

He also said, tellingly, that employees "followed established procedures" and that he "emphatically" stood behind them.

What is the solution, then, to a system that gave rise to such treatment? To recognize that profits are not the sole measure of a good decision in the corporate world. To realize that human beings are more important than money, no matter how much a free-market economist might object. To act morally. And to respect human dignity. #

Freeing rich to exploit poor: Trump & Brexit

[By George Monbiot, *The Guardian*, 4/8/17]

Propaganda works by sanctifying a single value, such as faith, or patriotism. Anyone who questions it puts themselves outside the circle of respectable opinion. The sacred value is used to obscure the intentions of those who champion it. **Today, the value is freedom.** Freedom is a word that powerful people use to shut down thought.

When think tanks and the billionaire press call for freedom, they are careful not to specify whose freedoms they mean. Freedom for some, they suggest, means freedom for all. In certain cases, this is true. You can exercise freedom of thought, for instance, without harming others. In other cases, one person's freedom is another's captivity.

When corporations free themselves from trade unions, they curtail the freedoms of their workers. When the very rich free themselves from tax, other people suffer through failing public services. When financiers are free to design exotic financial instruments, the rest of us pay for the crises they cause.

Above all, billionaires and the organizations they run demand freedom from something they call "red tape". What they mean by red tape is public protection. An article in the *Telegraph* last week was headlined "Cut the EU red tape choking Britain after Brexit to set the country free from the shackles of Brussels". Yes, we are choking, but not on red tape. We are choking because the government flouts European rules on air quality. The resulting air pollution frees thousands of souls from their bodies.

Ripping down such public protections means freedom for billionaires and corporations from the constraints of democracy. This is what Brexit -- and Donald Trump -- are all about. The freedom we were promised is the freedom of the very rich to exploit us.

To be fair to the *Telegraph*, which is running a campaign to deregulate the entire economy once Britain has left the EU, it is, unusually, almost explicit about who the beneficiaries are. It explains that "the ultimate goal of this whole process should be to ... set the wealth creators free". (Wealth creators: code for the very rich.) Among the potential prizes it lists are changes to the banana grading system, allowing strongly curved bananas to be categorized as Class 1, a return to incandescent light bulbs and the freedom to kill great crested newts.

I suspect that the Barclay brothers, the billionaires who own the *Telegraph*, couldn't give a monkey's about bananas. But as their business empire incorporates hotels, shipping, car sales, home shopping and deliveries, they might be intensely interested in the European working time directive and other aspects of employment law, tax directives, environmental impact assessments, the consumer rights directive, maritime safety laws and a host of similar public protections.

If the government agrees to a "bonfire of red tape", we would win bent bananas and newt-squashing prerogatives. On the other hand, we could lose our rights to fair employment, an enduring living world, clean air, clean

water, public safety, consumer protection, functioning public services, and the other distinguishing features of civilization. Tough choice, isn't it?

As if to hammer the point home, the *Sunday Telegraph* interviewed Nick Varney, chief executive of Merlin Entertainments, in an article claiming that the "red tape burden" was too heavy for listed companies. He described some of the public protections that companies have to observe as "bloody baggage". The article failed to connect these remarks to his company's own bloody baggage, caused by its unilateral decision to cut red tape. As a result of overriding the safety mechanism on one of its rides at Alton Towers -- which was operating, against the guidelines, during high winds -- 16 people were injured, including two young women who had their legs amputated. That's why we need public protections of the kind the *Telegraph* wants to destroy.

The same ethos, with the same justification, pervades the Trump administration. The new head of the environmental protection agency, Scott Pruitt, is seeking to annul the rules protecting rivers from pollution, workers from exposure to pesticides, and everyone from climate breakdown. It's not as if the agency was overzealous before: one of the reasons for the mass poisoning in Flint, Michigan, was its catastrophic failure to protect people from the contamination of drinking water by lead: a failure that now afflicts 18 million Americans.

As well as trying to dismantle the government's climate change program, Trump is waging war on even the most obscure forms of protection. For instance, he intends to remove funds from the tiny US chemical safety board, which investigates lethal industrial incidents. Discovering what happened and why would impede freedom.

On neither side of the Atlantic are these efforts unopposed. Trump's assault on public protections has already provoked dozens of lawsuits. The European council has told the UK government that if it wants to trade with the EU on favorable terms after Brexit, companies here cannot cut their costs by dumping them on the rest of society.

This drives the leading Brexiters berserk. As a result of the pollution paradox (the dirtiest corporations have to spend the most money on politics, so the political system comes to be owned by them), politicians like Boris Johnson and Michael Gove have an incentive to champion the freedom of irresponsible companies. But it also puts them in a bind. Their primary argument for deregulation is that it makes businesses more competitive. If it means those businesses can't trade with the EU, the case falls apart....

When we confront a system of propaganda, our first task is to decode it. This begins by interrogating its sacred value. Whenever we hear the word freedom, we should ask ourselves, "Freedom for whom, at whose expense?"

[George Monbiot writes a weekly column for the *Guardian* and is the author of a number of books, including *Heat: How to Stop the Planet Burning*; *The Age of Consent: A Manifesto for a New World Order*; *Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain*; and *Feral: Rewilding the Land, Sea and Human Life*. He recently helped to found Rewilding Britain, which seeks to redefine people's relationship to the living world.]

—TMC member Richard Placone submitted this article.