



Fourth Sunday of Easter

May 7, 2017

Readings

This week:

Acts of the Apostles 2:14a, 36–41

1 Peter 2:20b–25

John 10:1–10

Next week:

Acts of the Apostles 6:1–7

1 Peter 2:4–9

John 14:1–12

Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. (*Psalm 23*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Jack Izzo, 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

Today, May 7, 11:00 am — 1:00 pm TMC Annual Meeting (see notice on Page 2)

Monday, May 8, 7:00 p.m.

TMC Liturgy Committee, Thomas House Library

From Thomas Merton

The hope of the Christian must be, like the hope of a child, pure and full of trust. The child is totally available in the present because he has relatively little to remember, his experience of evil is as yet brief, and his anticipation of the future does not extend far. The Christian, in his humility and faith, must be as totally available to his brother, to his world, in the present, as the child is. But he cannot see the world with childlike innocence and simplicity unless his memory is cleared of past evils by forgiveness, and his anticipation of the future is hopefully free of craft and calculation. For this reason, the humility of Christian nonviolence is at once patient and uncalculating. The chief difference between nonviolence and violence is that the latter depends entirely on its own calculations. The former depends entirely on God and on His word.

—“Blessed Are the Meek: The Christian Roots of Nonviolence,” in *Passion for Peace: The Social Essays*.

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

TMC Annual Meeting today May 7:

TMC members will meet today for the Annual Meeting of the Thomas Mer-ton Center. The meeting and brunch will happen from 11:00 a.m. till 1:00 p.m. at the home of Bob and Judy Foley, 1927 Emerson Street, P.A.



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.

“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 Bouchev, 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.]

Catholic Charities compassionate care:

Finding compassionate care for the people you love can be a challenge. Dealing with the issues of Alzheimer's, dementia, and other aging issues is difficult enough.

Catholic Charities now has an Elder Care Line available to assist you in navigating through different scenarios, and choices that come with aging as well as the services and resources available to aide you on your journey.

Catholic Charities Elder care line offers confidential support, encouragement, and referrals for elder care service needs. Our professional elder care specialists understand the needs of seniors as well as their loved ones and offer a host of services and support when you need it most.

Elder Care Line and Homecare: (408) 831-0441.

Senior Activity Centers, in San Jose and Sunnyvale: (408) 270-4900.

Behavior Health Clinic in downtown San Jose: (408)-899-716.

Palo Alto award to Chippendales May 21st:

Avenidas Lifetimes of Achievement 2017 award is celebrating our own George and Ruth Chippendale!

You're invited to join us at the Avenidas 2017 Lifetimes of Achievement event, an afternoon Garden Party on Sunday, May 21 from 3-5 pm to celebrate the accomplishments of Marion Mandell, Dexter Dawes, Judy Sleeth, Terry & Carol Winograd, and Ruth & George Chippendale, this year's distinguished group of honorees.

Enjoy award-winning wines, tasty appetizers & desserts and music by the Jazz ConneXion as you mix and mingle at the Feldman Family House at 2121 Waverley in Palo Alto. Proceeds help fund the programs for positive aging that Avenidas provides to over 7,000 people on the mid-Peninsula.

Tickets are \$75 and are available online. Get your ticket and get ready for some fun!

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Another view of capitalism:

I would like to register a vigorous objection to the article from James Martin, S.J., (in last week's TMC bulletin) blaming capitalism for the appalling behavior of the United crew and the airport police in forcibly removing a paying passenger from the flight.

Capitalism would compel United to offer whatever it took to induce passengers who "owned" a valuable asset (their seat) to part with it. It is based on a willing buyer and a willing seller, and when seats are in short supply they suddenly become very valuable.

What United and the airport police did was wrong, and everyone has acknowledged that, and United has paid dearly for it. Bullies exist in every economic system and in many there would be no correction, as there has been in this case.

Greed is not unique to capitalists...it is a human issue, and all systems are susceptible to abuse by people in power. Our system is far from perfect, but it is a lot better than any other system I have seen. Stop blaming capitalism for the bullies who remain among us. "Capitalism" and "profit" are not dirty words, and the sooner we understand that, the sooner we can focus on the real issues in situations like the United debacle.

—TMC member Helen Baumann

Health care plea cuts through partisanship:

[Excerpts from an article by E. J. Dionne, Jr., in Commonweal Magazine, May 4, 2017.]

...So here's hoping that [comedian] Jimmy Kimmel wins some humanitarian awards for his thirteen-minute monologue about the recent birth of his son, Billy. He described how emergency heart surgery days after Billy was born saved his child's very new life.

Kimmel used his personal experience to ask the philosophical questions that need to animate every debate over whether health care is a right that ought to be underwritten by government: Why should being born with any sort of defect raise your insurance costs all your life? Why should the babies of well-off people, including comedians, have a better shot at surviving than newborns whose parents lack the money to buy health insurance? More generally, why should anyone be denied coverage?...

If Kimmel were describing politics in just about any other economically advanced democracy, he would be absolutely right...But Kimmel's assertion is *not* accepted by right-leaning politicians in the United States. It is not, alas, something "we all agree on." This is why Republicans are trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Republicans are having trouble with their repeal bill because the gut response of most Americans is that Kimmel is right and right-wing ideologues are wrong.

(Pope, continued from Page 4.)

that is also experiencing major growth in the developing world—precisely where Islam is growing, often in competition, but sometimes in collaboration.

The risk for religion, Francis explained at Al-Azhar, is not just about finding a balance between faith and reason, as Benedict tried to explain. It is also about striking a balance between the public and personal realms.

"Religion tends to be relegated to the private sphere, as if it were not an essential dimension of the human person and society," Francis said.

"At the same time, the religious and political spheres are confused and not properly distinguished," he warned. "Religion risks being absorbed into the administration of temporal affairs and tempted by the allure of worldly powers that in fact exploit it."

In this context, the pope urged Egyptian Christians to be a positive force within society; to be people of dialogue who are "sowers of hope" and able to forgive those who wrong them.

This is no easy task in a country where the ancient Christian communities suffer growing persecution and in some places are being driven out.

Nevertheless, Francis told them that "true faith" makes people "more merciful, more honest and more humane" and that the only fanaticism for a religious believer should be that of charity.

The increased vulnerability of Egypt's 9 million Christians, the vast majority of whom are Coptic Orthodox—there are only around 272,000 Coptic Catholics—could be bringing them closer together.

In Cairo, Francis reprised a favorite phrase about an "ecumenism of blood" between Catholic martyrs and Orthodox ones...Perhaps even more significant, however, was the historic moment when Francis, Tawadros and Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, the leader of Eastern Orthodoxy, sat alongside each other during an ecumenical prayer service.

It is believed to be the first time these leaders of three ancient streams of Christianity have shared a platform, and it represented an important—if symbolic—united front in defense of their flocks.

In the end, however, Francis' short Egypt trip will primarily be remembered for his willingness to take risks in the cause of peace and his demonstration that the Catholic Church can work with Islamic leaders on combating religious extremism.

That the pontiff and the imams are on the same page can only be a good thing for peace, and a crucial step forward following the contested approach of Benedict XVI.

But whether the extremists will heed any counsel other than their own is the real question, and one that may not have an answer anytime soon. #

Francis reaches out to Islam:

[Excerpts from an article by Christopher Lamb, Religion News Service, May 3, 2017]

The global growth of Islam and in particular the rise of Islamic extremism have forced recent popes to set out, with increasing urgency, a strategy for engaging the religion.

As Pope Francis' brief trip to Egypt over the weekend demonstrated, the most recent pontiffs have come up with starkly different approaches—though it's not yet clear if one is better than the other, or if either will be effective.

When Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI addressed the question of Islamic extremism he did so during a speech at a university in his Bavarian ...

That 2006 address in Regensburg, Germany, was a theological master class on the relationship between faith and reason. But it also angered Muslims who objected to Benedict citing a 14th-century Christian emperor who claimed that the Prophet Muhammad had only brought the world things that were "evil and inhuman."

Moreover, Benedict also delivered his message to Islam from afar.

Francis, on the other hand, has made it his business to try to build bridges with the Muslim world with the energy of a missionary.

That approach was on display during his 27-hour trip to Egypt, viewed as the leader in the majority Sunni Islamic world, and a nation that is making a serious—though controversial—effort to crack down on extremist-inspired violence.

So important to Francis, in fact, is the "personal encounter" with Muslims that the pontiff put his own safety at risk by going to Cairo, a trip that took place less than three weeks after 45 worshippers were killed in bomb attacks on two Egyptian churches.

The pope even shunned a bulletproof vehicle and when he arrived at a sports stadium for an open-air Mass he greeted the crowds from an open-topped golf buggy....

Yet even as the current pope pushes for a personal encounter with Islam, his predecessor's legacy of engaging Islam via a theological challenge to extremist elements among Muslims continues to hold some sway.

Indeed, just as Francis was heading to Egypt a letter appeared from the retired pope to the president of Poland in which Benedict accused "radical Islam" of creating an "explosive situation in Europe."

Catholic defenders of Benedict's Regensburg address insist that he correctly addressed some uncomfortable truths within Islam and they point out that the speech led 138 Islamic scholars to write to Benedict in 2007, a letter that paved the way for a new Catholic-Muslim dialogue initiative.

Yet while it was Muslims who approached Benedict a decade ago, under Francis things are the other way

round.

Francis' approach to Islam is characterized by a willingness to "cross over to the other side" — Egypt is the seventh Muslim majority country he has visited in his four years as pope. And a papal visit to Bangladesh, where almost 90 percent of the population are followers of Islam, is planned for later this year.

This has always been his style. When he was archbishop of Buenos Aires, Francis—then Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio—became the first Catholic bishop to visit Argentina's Islamic Center, and the Jesuit pope has continued to focus on building personal connections with Muslims.

In Egypt, this was symbolized by his embrace of Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, the grand imam of Al-Azhar mosque, following the pope's address to their peace conference.

It was a powerful image of Muslim and Christian fraternity that had echoes of St. Francis of Assisi's mission to Islamic leader Sultan Al-Kamil 800 years ago.

This personal approach has been bolstered by Francis' consistent refusal to link the Islamic faith per se to terrorism, and has made the Islamic world take notice.

It also meant that when Francis issued one of his strongest and most detailed condemnations of religious violence during his Al-Azhar address, his speech was welcomed and frequently interrupted with applause...

Al-Azhar, an influential 10th-century mosque and university, and its leaders are taking an active role to try and crack down on extremism in Islam. They are revered experts in interpretations of the Quran and that is key to countering the largely Sunni-inspired ideologues of the Islamic State, or ISIS, who use scripture to justify terrorist violence.

But those religious leaders also face an uphill task and a power struggle with the Egyptian government over who gets to reform what.

President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has made it his business to keep a lid on extremist violence since taking power in a 2013 coup that overthrew the country's first democratically elected president, Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood.

El-Sissi's administration has, for example, tightly controlled the content of Friday sermons delivered at the country's 100,000 mosques in an effort to curb growing fanaticism. It hasn't, however, stopped ISIS from picking off disaffected members of the Brotherhood. This puts the pope's attempts into perspective....

What all this underscores is how intertwined religious problems are with the politics of Egypt, a phenomenon that is common across the Arab world.

That is also a special challenge to those in the secular West who think if religious faith was sidelined then the problems go away.

Yet it presents an opportunity to the pope and the Vatican as leaders of an ancient Western religious institution

(Pope, continued on Page 3.)