



31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 4, 2018

Readings

This week:

Deuteronomy 6:2–6

Hebrews 7:23–28

Mark 12:28b–34

Next week:

1 Kings 17:10–16

Hebrews 9:24–28

Mark 12:38–44

Psalm

I love you, Lord, my strength. (*Psalm 18*)

Today

Today's presider is Msgr. John Sandersfeld.

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



Did you remember to change your clocks back one hour last night? Daylight Savings Time ended at midnight on November 3, 2018.

Thursday, Nov. 8, 7:00 p.m. TMC Board Meeting, TH Dining Room

From Thomas Merton

I used to think it would be a good thing to die young and die quickly, but now I am beginning to think a long life with much labor and suffering for God would be the greater grace. However, the greater grace for each individual is the one God wills for him. If God wills you to die suddenly, that is a greater grace for you than any other death, because it is the one he has chosen, by his love, with all the circumstances of your life and his glory in view.

--The Sign of Jonas

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

George Shultz at Seton School Nov. 8:

Join us for an evening with The Honorable Secretary George Shultz in conversation with Prof. Philip Taubman at St. Elizabeth Seton School on Thursday, Nov. 8, 6:00 -8:30 pm. Professor Taubman is working on the official biography of Secretary Shultz and will interview him on stage in the school's auditorium. A reception at 6:00 p.m. precedes the interview, and there will be time for questions and answers following Secretary Shultz's comments. Support Seton School by purchasing tickets (\$50 in advance, \$60 at the door) at: www.brownpapertickets.com (Search: "Shultz" or "Seton") or at www.setonpaloalto.org. Call Carmel Caligaris at (650) 326-1258 for more information.



Seton School Library needs volunteers:

Seton School turned its library into offices about a year ago, and the library books need to be catalogued before being installed in other classrooms.

Vicki Sullivan is looking for volunteers to help with this project on Mondays and Fridays from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. Contact her at (650) 740-0124, or vickisullivan@comcast.net.

November food drive:



November is Food Drive Month, which benefits our parish St. Vincent de Paul Conference. We are excited

that the youth of our parish STAY program will be helping distribute bags for your generous donations. The more food donated the less food we need to purchase.

Particularly needed: Pop-top can of chili or protein soup, Pop-top can of tuna or chicken.

Please grab a donation bag from the displays in each of our church vestibules beginning in November, and bring it back filled.

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Dick Freeman, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Hunter Kubit, Dick Jackman, 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 editors: Michelle Hogan, Kay Williams. See below.]

Altar of Remembrance for photos of deceased:



Themed on the Mexican tradition of the Day of the Dead, our Altar of Remembrance welcomes your photos of deceased loved ones. Be sure to label your photos on the back with your name and phone number, so they can be returned to you if you forget to pick them up at the end of November.

Save Dec. 1: Advent Morning with Fr. Ballard

Saturday, December 1, 9:00 a.m.-12 noon: Advent Morning of Reflection, led by Fr. Kevin Ballard, S.J., at Our Lady of the Rosary Church Hall, 3233 Cowper St., Palo Alto. Fr. Ballard will lead us into the Advent Scriptures to deepen our awareness of the call to holiness in the Advent season.

Adoration and Benediction at STA Nov. 7:

In support of offering more opportunities for personal prayer, our parish has been keeping St. Thomas Aquinas Church open until 5:00 p.m. each day.

Beginning November 7, Wednesdays at St. Thomas Aquinas Church will be the place for Adoration and Benediction. In addition to that, each Wednesday, the parish is going to offer Adoration and Benediction from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., before closing the church for the night, beginning this Wednesday, November 7.

You are encouraged to stop by and pray and adore Our Lord in this special and traditional way.

Kenya crafts available Nov. 11 down the street:

Did you miss the Kenya craft fair here in October? Donations to Kenya Help, a non-profit which provides resources and support to the women, girls and boys of the Naivasha area in Kenya, will give you the opportunity to select a Kenyan basket or bowl of bag or earring. On Sunday, Nov. 11, 11:00 - 2:00 pm, at First Presbyterian Church, 1140 Cowper St. in Palo Alto, the crafts will be on display. Come on down after this Mass and enjoy!

Board: Gerard McGuire, gerardmc@aol.com, 650-814-2223

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Catholics must fight anti-Semitism:

[The Editors, *America Magazine*, 10/29/18]

“Stop the words of hate,” pleaded Rabbi Jeffrey Myers of Tree of Life synagogue, the day after a gunman killed 11 people worshipping there in Pittsburgh (Oct. 27). The shooter reportedly shouted “All Jews must die” before he opened fire.

The shooter reportedly also made anti-Semitic comments to law enforcement after his arrest, including that “they [Jews] were committing genocide to his people.” He was also a frequent user of Gab, a social-media platform that places few restrictions on the content that can be shared. His posts there were at turns anti-Semitic, nativist and nationalistic.

Pope Francis condemned the attack, saying, “We are all, in reality, wounded by this inhuman act of violence.” His words were a reminder that Catholics have a special responsibility to stand with our Jewish brothers and sisters and denounce these acts of evil—especially given the church’s own painful history of anti-Semitism. The church has taught since “*Nostra Aetate*” in 1965 that there is a “spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews,” and reproves “any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion.”

On Saturday, President Donald J. Trump called for unity and condemned “the historic evil of anti-Semitism and every other form of evil.” Unfortunately, his incendiary rhetoric both before and after the attack has helped to foster an environment in which such evils can fester. Leaders of a Jewish group in Pittsburgh have written an open letter telling President Trump that “your words and your policies have emboldened a growing white nationalist movement” and have called on him to explicitly denounce white nationalism and cease his alarmist rhetoric about immigrants, refugees and minorities. Mr. Trump must recognize that his strong rejection of this specific episode of anti-Semitic violence cannot be fully credible if he continues to stoke fear and sow division for political advantage on other fronts. His call for unity needs to start with a clear break with his own patterns of accusatory and violent rhetoric.

We must reject violence. But this is the least that we should do. We must also directly challenge the de-ranked ideologies that spawn such acts and the toxic political culture in which they find a fertile soil. This means challenging the villainization and marginalization of Jews and other minority groups, which give encouragement, even if unintentionally, to these acts of

violent depravity. The recent rhetoric directed against these groups is inhumane, un-Christian and un-American. In heeding Rabbi Myers’ call to end hateful words, we must also move past empty gestures. Now is the time to stand in peaceful solidarity with our brothers and sisters, with our whole minds, our hearts and our willing hands.

If the church has learned anything from its own history of anti-Semitism, it is that looking the other way is never justified. All people, but above all Christians, have a moral duty to support our Jewish neighbors; to call out anti-Semitism whenever and wherever it rears its odious head.

Sr. Joan Chittister reflects on All Saints Day:

...It’s not what we do that makes us holy. It’s what we love that makes the difference between being simply a spiritual virtuoso and being a saint.

The Sufi understood the paradox very well. They tell a story about Isa ibn Maryam: Jesus, Son of Mary. One day Isa saw a group of people sitting miserably on a wall, moaning out loud and full of fear. “What is your affliction?” he asked. “It is our fear of hell,” the people complained.

Then Isa came upon a second group. They were emaciated and wan and full of anxiety. “What is your affliction?” Isa asked them. “Desire for Paradise has made us like this,” the people cried.

Finally, Isa came upon a third group. They were scarred and bruised, wounded and tired but their faces were radiant with joy. “What has made you like this?” Isa asked. And the people answered, “We have seen the Spirit of Truth. We have seen Reality,” they sighed. “And this has made us oblivious of lesser goals.”

And Isa said, “These are the ones who attain. On the Last Day, they will be in the Presence of God.”

If we live our spiritual lives only in fear of punishment or in hope of reward, rather than in the awareness of the One because of whom all life is worthwhile, we can be religious people but we will never be holy people. Then life is simply a series of tests and trials and scores, not the moment by moment revelation of God who is present in everything that happens to us, in everything we do.

Sanctity is about how we view life. It is not about spiritual exercises designed to evaluate our spiritual athleticism or a kind of spiritual bribery designed to win us spiritual prizes we do not deserve.

Coming to know the sacred—the energy of air, the possibility in children, the beauty of regret, the value of life—is what makes us holy. (www.joanchittister.org)

Synod's mistake on LGBT Catholics:

[By John Gehring, *Commonweal*, 11/2/18]

The recently concluded Synod on Young People reflected Pope Francis's call for "a listening church" that accompanies people and discerns together. Unlike synods in previous papacies, where a final script was essentially drafted in advance and most bishops dutifully signed off, a more authentic process unfolded during the month-long gathering that ended Oct. 28. A mode of engagement that prioritizes a humble posture of encounter is essential if the Catholic Church hopes to stem the tide of young people leaving an institution they often view as irrelevant, hypocritical, and aloof. ...

"We've gone from talking about young people and from talking to young people to talking with them," said Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales. A hopeful church that listens from below and engages in dialogue is better positioned than a fearful, fortress church to fulfill the Second Vatican Council's proclamation to read the "signs of the times." For young gay Catholics and their allies, the synod offered a space where bishops could learn from the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties, of the LGBT faithful. Signs pointed to a potentially important step forward. In a document prepared before the synod, the Vatican used the term "LGBT" for the first time. "Some LGBT youth," it read, want to "benefit from greater closeness and experience greater care from the church." Not exactly a revolutionary statement, and rather painfully obvious. But the use of "LGBT" was striking and significant. The church has a major language problem when it comes to respecting the dignity of gay, lesbian, and transgender people. Catholic teaching documents typically use "homosexual" or refer to "homosexual tendencies." Using the LGBT descriptor—often preferred by many gay, lesbian, and transgender people—is a sign of respect.

But the final report from the synod did not use the term "LGBT." Several bishops, including Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput, criticized its potential appearance. For the church, he said, "there is no such thing as an 'LGBTQ Catholic' or a 'transgender Catholic' or a 'heterosexual Catholic,' as if our sexual appetites defined who we are."

This observation reflects, perhaps unwittingly, a certain theological arrogance. Saying there are "no LGBT Catholics," when many Catholics who love and contribute to the church embrace that description, is disrespectful at best, and at worst denies a person dignity. Chaput warns of "sexual appetites" defining who we are—a reasonable caution—but it seems that the archbishop is the one who is reducing being gay, lesbian, or transgender to sexual mechanics, as if our friends, neighbors, and family members are little more than a bundle of physical urges rather than complex and multidimensional human beings....

But the church does recognize and often names those who reflect our diversity. ... There is a proud tradition of celebrating Irish-American and Italian-American Catholics' contributions to the church, distinct cultures that are nonetheless part of the beautiful mosaic of Catholicism. [I]dentifying as an LGBT Catholic doesn't circumscribe one's identity, but acknowledges its significance as part of the whole.

For Archbishop Chaput, the church should not use LGBT because it is wrong to, in his words, "categorize people." This is a laudatory concept, until you reflect on the irony of that statement coming from a leader in a church that uses language often viewed as clinical and demeaning by the very people it seeks to describe. Homosexual "inclinations" and "intrinsically disordered," words used in official church teaching, also categorize people, and in ways that exclude and wound...

The synod's final report included some positive things: reiterating the church's condemnation of any violence directed at sexual minorities; acknowledging that ministry to gay and lesbian people is already being done in the church; and emphasizing accompaniment. ... [T]he report noted that "there are questions related to the body, to affectivity and to sexuality that require a deeper anthropological, theological, and pastoral exploration." This is significant, and it rattles conservative bishops. "The Catholic hierarchy is acknowledging that the church needs to update its understanding of the science of sex and gender, and that also means updating the church's theology on sexuality and its ministry to gay people," David Gibson wrote in an analysis for Religion News Service....

Several U.S. bishops, including Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich, have articulated a strong message of solidarity with LGBT Catholics. Putting this accompaniment into practice will require calling out organizations such as Church Militant, a group that bullies, threatens, and demeans LGBT Catholics and their allies. ...

Of course the Catholic Church doesn't condone this abuse; in fact, the Catechism explicitly denounces it. Nevertheless, some bishops and other church leaders foster a toxic culture that scapegoats and demonizes LGBT laity and clergy. Former Vatican ambassador Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, who has called for Pope Francis's resignation, warns of "homosexual networks" with the "power of octopus tentacles" that are "strangling" the church.... Such language only tills the soil for potentially violent acts. As James Baldwin wrote: "It is a terrible, an inexorable law that one cannot deny the humanity of another without diminishing one's own." When the church continues to deny LGBT people their full humanity, isn't that the risk it takes?

John Gehring is Catholic program director at Faith in Public Life, an advocacy group in Washington, and a former associate director for media relations at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He is author of The Francis Effect: A Radical Pope's Challenge to the American Catholic Church (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015) and a contributing editor to Commonweal.