



# 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 18, 2018

## Readings

*This week:*

Daniel 12: 1-3

Hebrews 10:11-14, 18

Mark 13:24-32

*Next week:*

Daniel 7:13-14

Revelation 1:5-8

John 18:33b-37

## Psalm

You are my inheritance, O Lord. (*Psalm 16*)

## Today

Today's presider is Fr. Xavier Lavagetto.

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

No meetings this week. Happy Thanksgiving Day!

## From Thomas Merton

If we know how great is the love of Jesus for us we will never be afraid to go to Him in all our poverty, all our weakness, all our spiritual wretchedness and infirmity. Indeed, when we understand the true nature of His love for us, we will prefer to come to Him poor and helpless. We will never be ashamed of our distress. Distress is to our advantage when we have nothing to seek but mercy. . . .

The surest sign that we have received a spiritual understanding of God's love for us is the appreciation of our own poverty in the light of His infinite mercy.

—*Thoughts in Solitude*



# COMMUNITY NOTES

## News Announcements Requests

### **Prayer shawl ministry:**

Do you like to knit, crochet or weave? The Prayer Shawl Ministry would love your help creating a simple shawl for a person in great need of comfort and prayers.

Our Pastoral Home Ministry and other parishioners come to us for an appropriate shawl and we like to provide a selection for any request. Prayer shawls are blessed by a parish priest at a morning mass with attendees adding their prayers. The shawl you create will provide lots of love and warmth. Knitting might even help you stay warmer this winter!

You may call Terry at (650) 714-2131 or Judi Swope at (650) 856-6972 with any questions.

### **Kenyan crafts fairs:**

Each year Margo McAuliffe brings home crafts from Kenya that are sold at craft fairs like the one here earlier this month.

The mission of Kenya Help is to educate and train women, children and youth in Kenya by providing resources and support. It has no paid positions, and operating costs were approximately 3.3% of the 2013 budget, so 96.7% of your donation goes straight to Kenya. There is one more crafts fair coming up between now and Christmas, on Tuesday, December 4, 6:00-8:00, St. Gregory's Women's Club, San Mateo

Kenya Help is a non-profit foundation with 501(c)(3) status. If you shop on Amazon, consider designating us as your AmazonSmile beneficiary. Just use the link at the Kenya Help website.

### **A Thanksgiving prayer:**

Bless us, O Lord,  
And bless these, your children,  
Who have planted and harvested  
And brought us this food.

Bless us, O Lord,  
And bless these, your children,  
Who still wait for such abundance  
To be brought to them.

These brothers and sisters in Christ  
Are with us at this table.

We are grateful  
For the solidarity  
That we receive  
Through your bounty.  
Through Christ,  
Our Lord, Amen.

### **Catholic Campaign for Human Development:**

Today is the day in 2018 that we collect your donations for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. In the United States, one in seven people lives in poverty. With this collection you support programs that address the causes of poverty and provide a sustainable future for those who are struggling across the country. In addi-



tion, 25% of funds collected remain in our diocese to fund local anti-poverty projects. Please prayerfully consider how you can support this collection and work on the margins. More information about the Catholic Campaign for Human Development can be found at [www.usccb.org/cchd/collection](http://www.usccb.org/cchd/collection).

### **Adopt a Family begins this Sunday:**

Adopt a Family's 2018 Christmas Season begins today. Before and after the 8:45 Mass November 18 and 25, information and gift tags for students and families chosen from St. Elizabeth Seton School will be available. You may choose to purchase a child's or family's specific gift request or purchase a gift certificate from Target or similar store for a child to purchase a second gift. We are suggesting approximately a \$40 value per gift this year. (This is separate from the tags on the tree displayed at the back of church each year.)

All gifts are to be wrapped, tagged and returned to the TMC table at church by Sunday, December 9. Contact Barbara Kent at (650) 323-0879 with questions. Please stop by our table to pick up a tag. Merry Christmas to all TMC elves!!

Please remember in your prayers this week: Denise Alonghi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chipendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Dick Freeman, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Jean Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Dick Jackman, Hunter Kubit, 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.

# COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

## ***For real change, we must get at four roots deeper than church structures:***

*Abridged from an article by Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittester, September 20, 2018, at ncronline.org.*

In the midst of the angst that has accompanied the revelation of unparalleled amounts of sexual abuse of children in the Catholic Church, the cry for reform gets louder by the day. For some, it's a call for the elimination of celibacy as an unnatural and therefore impossible way of life. For others, it's about barring homosexuals from the priesthood, as if homosexuality was in essence a model of immorality rather than simply another state of nature—just like heterosexuality with its own immoral aberrations. For many, it's about a lack of psychosocial development in seminaries; for others, it's about the liberalization of the church since the Second Vatican Council, no matter that the bulk of assaults happened, apparently, before the end of the council.

Indeed, there are as many explanations for this crisis in morals, spirituality, church and trust as there are people, dioceses, parents, priests, lawyers, whomever. But there is one element on which everyone seems to agree: There must be repentance. There must be accountability. There must be reform.

Good. And that looks like what?

... Clerics make up less than 1% of the church. But clericalism makes its clerics superior to the rest of the church in power, the presumption of holiness, absolute parochial authority and as the keepers of accountability. It moves clerics light years away from the Jesus who "did not see being equal to God a thing to be clung to." It moves the rest of us to talk about being "the people of God"—as if we knew we were—but then fail to call the clerical church to public discussion of great theological "truths."

What Francis' statement fails to unmask, however, is the second issue that must be addressed: The fact is that clericalism touched more than the clergy. It was Catholic police, lawyers, staff, even parents who shielded pedophiles by refusing to make complaints, listen to children, or rip away the secrecy that shielded them. It says that the theology of the church itself must be retaught. It says that the rest of the church itself must grow up to be equal to the Christianization of the church itself.

A third dimension of the problem is certainly the theology of obedience that derives, of course, from our definition of church and the role of the clergy but affects the

## ***Leonardo Boff's model of charism offers road map out of clericalism:***

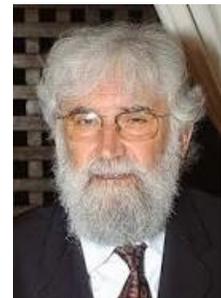
*Abridged from an article by St. Joseph Sr. Christiane Schenk, September 15, 2018, at ncronline.org.*

I cannot help wondering if the current implosion of ecclesiastical credibility over clergy sex abuse has the potential to create a new moment of grace, one that breaks down outmoded governance models and creates new ones better suited for our times. We may already have a road map—thanks to liberation theologian Leonardo Boff.

While completing my master's studies in theology in 1992, I was smitten by Boff's prophetic book *Church: Charism and Power*. At the time that the book was published in 1981, Boff was a Franciscan priest and theologian based in Brazil. . . . For Boff, the church is the sacrament of the Holy Spirit, and since the Spirit is given to all of the people of God, one could ask what organizational or jurisdictional structures function best for releasing the Spirit's gifts on behalf of the reign of God?

After extensive study of more Eurocentric theological traditions, Boff dared to suggest a new model of church governance. In his model, charism (Spirit-gift) is the organizing principle, rather than the monarchical structures we now have. He points to St. Paul, who saw charism as a concrete function or service that each Christian exercised on behalf of everyone in the community. For Paul, there are no non-charismatic Christians, everyone has an important place, and each of us is called to serve the community. Boff observes, "This model of Christian life is very different from the one in which the hierarchy takes all sacred power and all the means of religious production, saying in effect, 'You will listen obey, ask no questions, and do as we say.'"

In Boff's model, the hierarchy is just one charismatic state in the church, and it must not suffocate the other charisms raised up by the Spirit. Further, the function of hierarchy is to "make way for unity and harmony among the various services" (charisms) exercised by the faithful. It is not a leap to say that in this model, leaders (priests, deacons and bishops) would be selected based on who has the gifts for the office, not on the basis of gender or power.



## *Leonardo Boff's model, . . .continued:*

Predictably, in 1984 Boff was put on trial by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and sentenced to a year of "obsequious silence" by then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. Boff would leave the priesthood in 1992, after Ratzinger tried to silence him again. Boff's book was said to "endanger the sound doctrine of the faith." Yet as anyone who has read it can attest, the only thing *Church: Charism and Power* endangered was the nonaccountable monarchical structures from which we suffer grievously today.

It is painfully clear that rampant clericalism in a closed "good ol' boys" network allowed both horrendous sexual abuse and an egregious cover-up by bishops. These same bishops chose to preserve the clerical system rather than protect our children.

What are we to do?

Suggestions abound including: establishing a new National Review Board in hopes of holding bishops accountable, monitoring diocesan lay review boards, sponsoring cathedral protests, and even appointing women as cardinals. These could be helpful in the short term. But they also risk perpetuating the monarchical-clerical system when what is needed is a radical overhaul. Here is my take on what a "radical overhaul" might involve:

Why not convene a worldwide synod on the Holy Spirit in Catholic life and leadership, at which representation from all of the people of God would have deliberative voice alongside the bishops? One agenda item could be discussion/discernment of new mechanisms for integrating the Spirit-gifts of the people of God into church ministry and decision-making. Another could be an exploration of linking church governance to the sacrament of baptism rather than to ordination. Surely, through the power of the Spirit, such dialogue and discussion could help us discover the checks and balances so desperately needed in modern Catholic governance.

. . . Yes, it all sounds pretty much pie-in-the-sky. But I believe in miracles. Against all odds, we sisters in the U.S. survived the apostolic visitation and the doctrinal assessment. We survived because of the power of the Spirit at work in us—as well as in the bishops Rome had appointed to investigate us.

I just finished reading *However Long the Night*—a beautiful little book from the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. In a series of brief essays, the sister-leaders describe contemplative decision-making processes that made room for the Spirit of God to lead and guide them through a painful conflict with the Vatican. It exemplifies many of Boff's writings about the central place of charism in the life of the church.

The Spirit knows what s/he is about. As perhaps never before, it is time for us to act, and to trust her.

## *For real change, . . .continued:*

personal lives of Catholics in a particularly insidious way. It turns obedience in the church—a commitment to "listening to the Spirit"—into blind obedience, a kind of military code attached to a series of clerical commanding officers.

As a result, 100% of the decisions, the discernment and the moral perspectives of the laity are simply ignored. National conferences of bishops, dioceses and parish priests—the clerical 1% of the church—all stumble along laying down laws developed by few but heralded by the clergy alone.

. . . And finally, under it all, the fourth necessary element of reform lies in the theology of priesthood that insists that the ontology of the human being is changed by priestly ordination. Translation: a priest is not like other human beings. Ordination gives them a special mark, an eternal one. Then, out of that reasoning, they connect their special character, their special place in the church, their special authority, their special holiness.

To be honest with you, I have never met anybody who wasn't special in a special way. To reserve that for priesthood obviously distorts the character of the rest of the church. As it has.

From where I stand, it seems to me that what we wind up with is a sin against adult conscience and the infantilization of the laity. What we finally wind up with are questions of church, clericalism, obedience and human ontology unanswered and unaddressed.

What we wind up with is a church still living in the last century while pretending to have answers to the questions of this one. But that's just what they did in the 16th century when Martin Luther wanted to talk about celibacy, the sale of relics, and publishing the Bible in the vernacular so that everybody, not just the clergy, could read it.

The truth is that real reform depends on the teachings of the church. Not simply on a change of structures.

As the song says, "When will they ever learn?"

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