



Fifth Sunday of Easter

April 29, 2018

Readings

This week:

Acts 9:26-31

1 John 3:18-24

John 15:1-8

Next week:

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

1 John 4:7-10

John 15:9-17

Psalm

I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people. (*Psalm 22*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Jack Izzo.

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.

From Thomas Merton

At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, which is never at our disposal, from which God disposes of our lives, which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our own mind or the brutalities of our own will. This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty is the pure glory of God in us. It is so to speak His name written in us, as our poverty, as our indigence, as our dependence, as our sonship. It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody, and if we could see it we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face and blaze of a sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely ... I have no program for this seeing. It is only given. But the gate of heaven is everywhere.

—*Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

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

LWV on ballot props next Sunday:

Next Sunday, May 6, following our Mass (10:15 to 11:15) in the Thomas House, representatives from the League of Women Voters will be here to discuss the six propositions that we will be voting on in the June primary. They will give an objective perspective for each proposition, so grab your coffee and donut and come to the Thomas House living room. You'll know more when you leave than when you walked in the door!



ValLimar Jansen coming May 6:

ValLimar Jansen, a highly regarded speaker, singer, composer, and recording artist, is coming to OLR next Sunday, May 6, 1:00-5:00 pm, to lead an afternoon of prayer and song on *Our Call to True Discipleship*. ValLimar trained as a Fine Arts major at Howard University in Washington, DC, and she holds masters and doctorate degrees in the arts from California State University, San Bernardino, and the University of California, Santa Barbara.



ValLimar has been the cantor for several jazz liturgies and closing liturgies at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress. She has sung with David Haas, Marty Haugen, Bob Hurd, Tom Kendzia, Jesse Manibusan, and many others. She is a guest artist on Marty Haugen's *Turn My Heart* and Cross Culture's CD of global praise music, *Songs of Faith From Near and Far*. ValLimar and her husband Frank also have a CD, *Catholic Classics: African American Sacred Songs*.

Golf for a good cause:

Play golf at Stanford and empower children of low-income families to reach their full potential! Join us for the 23rd Annual Seton Scramble for Students on Monday, May 14, 2018. A full day of golf at Stanford includes a Hobeys breakfast, a boxed lunch, and a Coupa Cafe catered afternoon reception (with a lively auction)—plus wine, beer and beverages throughout the day! Tournament prizes too! Non-golfers are also welcome to the afternoon reception and auction starting at 4:00 pm. All proceeds directly support tuition assistance for students at St. Elizabeth Seton School.

Register at www.setonpaloalto.org or contact Carmel Caligaris for more information: development@setonpaloalto.org or (650) 326-1258.

TMC Annual Meeting is May 20:

All TMC members are invited to attend the TMC 2018 Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 20, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, at the home of Bob and Judy Foley, 1927 Emerson St., Palo Alto. Details to follow, but save the date.

May Day parade on May 5:

Palo Alto's annual May Day Parade on Saturday, May 5, will come down Waverley Street and end right in front of St. Thomas Aquinas church.

The STA Site Committee opens the church to visitors (who can enjoy an organ concert played by Professor Bill Mahrt), serves coffee and lemonade to parade watchers, and presents a welcoming face to the many families who are standing on the sidewalk watching their children march by in the Scout troops and school bands.



We keep the church restroom open as well—it is a welcome stop for many of the parade-watchers! Volunteers to help with the beverages are needed—between 9:30 and noon, or any portion thereof. Because the parade route is closed to cars early Saturday morning, you must park south of Channing Ave. Let Kay Williams know if you can help out: (650) 270-4188, or kaywill@pacbell.net.

Pope names three laywomen to doctrinal congregation:

By Carol Glatz, *Catholic News Service*, April 23, 2018, at nronline.com.

Pope Francis appointed three women as consultants to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the first time women and laypersons were named as active contributors—not support staff. The Vatican announced the appointments April 21. The new female consultants are:

—**Linda Ghisoni**, born in Italy in 1965, one of two women Pope Francis named to be undersecretaries of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life in 2017. . . . Ghisoni is a seasoned canon lawyer and jurist, having served

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A Thomas Merton Center envelope is included in the



bulletin the last Sunday of each month. Your donation makes possible our monthly contribution to St. Elizabeth Seton School; our spiritual education programs, weekly bulletin, and other publications; and hospitality after Mass and at other meetings. We need your support—please be generous!

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

What sustains you?:

Subtitled Caring for others can be a source of life, by Jessie Bazan, at uscatholic.org, April 18, 2018. Bazan serves as outreach coordinator for Saint John's Abbey youth formation minister at Pax Christi Catholic Community in Minnesota.

Let me tell you about Maria.

Maria is a white woman in her late 50s who cleans toilets at a major sports arena. She lugs three bulky duffel bags bursting with plastic Tupperware through the security line as she checks in for her minimum-wage job. She wears a scowl on her face. The rest of her body is dressed in whatever she found at the local Society of St. Vincent de Paul thrift store. This is what most people see when they see Maria—if they see her at all.

My dad is not most people. After retiring from a career in health care, my dad picked up a few side jobs to keep busy and earn a little extra cash. He spends most weekends working security at the same sports arena as Maria. His job is to check bags to make sure no one sneaks

. . . Three laywomen, continued:

as both a lawyer and a judge on the Diocese of Rome's tribunal, the Roman Rota and the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. After completing her studies in philosophy and theology in Tübingen, Germany, she obtained her doctorate in canon law at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. She did further specialized studies and earned diplomas from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments in 1994 and, in 2002, from the Roman Rota, a Vatican court that deals mainly with marriage cases. She also has authored several scientific publications relating to canon law.

—**Michelina Tenace**, born in Italy in 1954, is a professor and head of the department of fundamental theology at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University. An expert on Christianity in the East, she is also part of Rome's Aletti Center, which is connected to the Jesuit-run Pontifical Oriental Institute and encourages studies of European Christianity and bringing together the cultures and spirituality of the continent's Eastern and Western traditions. She was one of the six men and six women the pope appointed in 2016 to a commission to study the issue of women deacons, particularly their ministry in the early church.

—**Laetitia Calmeyn**, born in Belgium in 1975, teaches theology at the College des Bernardins in Paris. She is a nurse specializing in palliative care and received her doctorate from the John Paul II Pontifical Theological Institute. . . .

weapons or alcohol onto the grounds. It's the same routine for 20,000 people: Glance in the purse. Rummage through the backpack. Send the approved people on their way. After giving Maria and her duffel bags the "all clear" a few times, my dad paused once and said,

"Excuse me, ma'am, I'm just curious . . . what are these containers for?" Maria's scowl quickly turned to a smile. In the months that followed, Maria shared pieces of her story with the security guard who cared. My dad learned that Maria experienced homelessness three years ago. She lived under a highway overpass just a few miles from the arena for years. Now Maria spends her time outside of work caring for a sick friend who can barely move on his own. Life keeps throwing curve balls at Maria—and this strong woman continues to step up to the plate.

During one security check, my dad asked, "Maria, what keeps you going? What sustains you?" Maria replied, "The goodness of people. It's like a shade went up on my window. When I was homeless, all I could see was how bad I was inside and that I didn't deserve a good life. When the shade lifted, I could look outside myself. I saw goodness in people that I never saw before."

Maria told my dad she does not belong to any particular religion. She said, "I just believe there is a loving God and I'm doing my part to share the good news."

Hauling duffel bags full of Tupperware is one way she shares God's good news. After every game Maria fills her containers with leftover chicken fillets, burgers, and other uneaten treats. She brings it all to the homeless shelter where she used to stay.

"The reason I took this cleaning job was so I could have access to all this leftover food," Maria explained.

"Usually arenas just throw it away, but I know people who would really enjoy it."

My dad is convinced Maria is a present-day prophet. She lives on the edge and points to what really matters—such as feeding the hungry. The two now share a greeting or story when they check in for work. The security guard and the cleaning lady, two people who often get passed by without a glance. Two people who rarely hear "thank you," from those they serve. Two people who see the goodness in themselves and in the people around them. Not long ago as my dad scanned over the duffel bags of Tupperware for what felt like the hundredth time, Maria flashed a grateful grin at her colleague.

"Bill, do you realize you're the first one who's ever asked what these are for?" she said with a smile. "That's why I told you! No one else ever asked."

Waffle House shooting: A white shooter, a black hero, and white presidential silence:

Abridged from an article by John Pavlovitz at johnpavlovitz.com, April 23, 2018, submitted by Dick Placone.

The shooting at a Tennessee Waffle House and its aftermath, say everything about this presidency: A white shooter. People of color brutally murdered. A black, gunless hero saving strangers. A silent white President. It's all been on full display:

No calls by Fox News to ban angry young white guys. No white evangelical televangelists taking to social media to condemn the evils of racism and the danger of gun proliferation. Nothing about the victims of color.

Not a damn word from GOP leaders. Barely even any cursory "thoughts and prayers" for the dead. No presidential praise for the black man who saved countless lives without a weapon. . . .

This week is a microcosm of Trump's America: Contempt for people with brown skin, by white people specifically emboldened. White privilege expressed in violent rage, with a weapon far too easily procured. A refusal to hold white, homegrown criminals accountable for the terrors they inflict—and to name them as terrorists. A purposeful Right silence in the face of people whose lives dispense with their preferred false narrative about people of color and the dangers in the world. A mass murder where none of the GOP tropes fit, and so there is no high horse to mount, no soapbox to stand upon, no pulpit to pound—and instead, only silence and hiding.

This week brings many fresh reminders.

It reminds us of the goodness within all people; of the similar selflessness that resides in disparate humanity, regardless of its pigmentation or orientation or nation of origin; of the incredible courage we are equally capable of. It reminds us that people like James Shaw Jr. are precisely what is making America great, and that we are called at all times to be prepared to stand up to the monsters when they appear—whether wielding weapons or legislation or bully pulpits.

It reminds us that white people rarely get painted as the villains here, even when they easily earn such titles—and that people of color have rarely received a hero's welcome, even when clearly being heroic. . . . It reminds us that we can't rely on our elected officials and our paid clergy to champion diversity and equality; that we the people will have to do that; repeatedly, loudly, passionately. It also reminds us that our nation is not going to be made great because of this President and those like him—but in spite of them.

This week we are seeing who we are, America. And we're seeing who we could be—if more good people move and more good people speak.

"I have made serious mistakes," says pope:

Abridged from an article by Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese, April 17, 2018, at ncronline.org.

. . . Authority figures often fear admitting mistakes to avoid undermining their credibility. This is why many in the Roman Curia thought Pope John Paul II was crazy when, as part of the celebration of two millennia of Christianity, he decided not only to celebrate the achievements of 2,000 years of Christianity but also to ask for forgiveness for the sins of the church during the same period. Such an admission, they thought, would weaken the authority of the church. After all, if the church made mistakes in the past, it could make mistakes in the future, so why should people follow it? Of course, the opposite happened. John Paul gained credibility and respect for his honesty.

In his recent letter to Chilean bishops, Pope Francis has admitted he made "grave errors" in judgment in dealing with the sexual abuse crisis there. He had defended Bishop Juan Barros, who was accused of knowing about the abuse done by the Rev. Fernando Karadima but doing nothing about it. Francis said there was no proof. He even accused the bishop's accusers of "calumny."

Eventually, Francis did the right thing and sent Maltese Archbishop Charles Scicluna to investigate. . . . Scicluna is one of the few clerics trusted by survivors of sexual abuse. His 2,300-page report based on 64 interviews forced the pope to acknowledge with "pain and shame" the "many crucified lives" of those who were victims of abuse.

The pope admitted he was wrong and apologized. This was not a "non-apology apology," but a full-throated admission that he had messed up. "I have made serious mistakes in the assessment and perception of the situation," he wrote. He said this was due to a "lack of truthful and balanced information," but it was still his mistake. "I ask forgiveness from all those I offended," he said, "and I hope to be able to do so personally, in the coming weeks, in the meetings I will have with representatives of the people who were interviewed."

. . . Popes are not supposed to make mistakes. And if they do, the church tends to wait decades—if not centuries—before admitting it. But Francis from the beginning of his papacy has admitted that he is a sinner like every other Christian. He made a mistake, corrected it, asked for forgiveness. That is what it means to be a Christian. . . .

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