



13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 1, 2018

Readings

This week:

Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24

2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15

Mark 5:21-43

Next week:

Ezekiel 2:2-5

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Mark 6:1-6a

Psalm

I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me. (*Psalm 30*)

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. 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

One of the paradoxes of the mystical life is this: that you cannot enter into the deepest center of yourself and pass through that center into God, unless you are able to pass entirely out of yourself and empty yourself and give yourself to other people in the purity of selfless love.

And so one of the worst illusions in the life of contemplation would be to try to find God by barricading yourself inside your own soul, shutting out all external reality by sheer concentration and will-power, cutting yourself off from the world and others by stuffing yourself inside your own mind and closing the door like a turtle.

. . . The more I become identified with God, the more will I be identified with all the others who are identified with Him. His Love will live in all of us. His Spirit will be our One Life, the Life of all of us and Life of God. And we shall love one another and God with the same Love with which He loves us and Himself. This love is God Himself.

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

Backpacks for Seton students:

We are again taking on a project this summer to purchase backpacks and school supplies for the children of St. Elizabeth Seton School. Our goal is to provide 50 backpacks in any color except red or blue. You can pick them up at Costco or Target (or anywhere else), or you



can contribute cash and we'll buy the backpacks and supplies. Checks can be made out to St. Elizabeth Seton school, with "Backpacks" on the memo line. Checks or purchases should be brought to St. Thomas

Aquinas Church by Sunday, August 12. If you have questions, call our coordinator, John Arnold, at (650) 269-2950, or e-mail him at jsaoso@comcast.net.

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.

Farewell message from Fr. Stanley:

I have been truly blessed to have served 10 of my 27 years as a priest in the parish of St. Thomas Aquinas: as Parochial Vicar (1996-1998) and Pastor (2010-2018). I'm fairly certain that 10 years is the longest time any priest has ministered here since "the merger" in 1987. In fact, all three of my cats have spent time with me at St. Albert the Great Rectory.

We've done some good work together, and I am confident I leave behind a strong faith community. I will miss the diversity of our worship sites. I am very thankful for the guidance and support of all our committees. I am pleased with the improvements we've made to our churches, schools, and other buildings.

... It's time to turn another chapter in both my life and the life of our parish. Change is good because it brings new opportunities for growth. Being a pastor is not easy. My job is to be in the breach between the flock and what would prey on them. My place is where Christ placed Himself. I have done the best I could, and I woke up each new day trying to do better, so that I might lead us to where Christ would have us go. Now my hair's a little grayer, my wrinkles are a little deeper, but with the same optimism and hope I brought to the work I love 2,920 days ago, I want you to know my heart is filled with gratitude. Thank you all for a wonderful 10 years!

Independence day prayer:

Lord, we stand today
as our forefathers have stood before You in times gone by,
celebrating our history and reveling in all the great things
that our country has achieved.
On this day we rejoice in the favor You have graciously given us.

We thank You for the blessings of liberty, for this generation and
for the generations to come.

We thank You for our independence and peace,
and for all those who have bravely given their lives
in the defense of freedom and justice.

We thank You that Your gracious and provident hand
has given us so much.

Yet as a nation and people
we have not always chosen the right way.
We ask You to forgive us for these times.

On this day we commit ourselves
to wholeheartedly honoring and serving You.
With everything that we are, we lay our lives before You.
Make us a generous people a holy nation,
a people set aside to love You forever,

for the sake of the land of the brave and free,
And the peoples and nations of this world.

Today, we do not presume Your grace for our country.
Our land is in need of You,
our people are in need of You,
our industry and business are in need of You.

May we look only to You
this Independence Day, dependent on You.
Please come now by Your glorious Holy Spirit,
Breathe new life into the sinews of this nation.
May justice flow like rivers,
And righteousness like a never failing stream,
Until the whole of our country is covered with Your glory,
As the waters cover the sea.

We ask all this in the wonderful name of Jesus,
Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit.
One God, now and for all eternity. Amen.

—www.lords-prayer-words.com

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

What the prodigal son can teach us about mindfulness:

Abridged from an article in americamagazine.org, June 25, 2018, by Patrick M. DeCarlo, a psychotherapist practicing in South Florida.

Cave divers can plumb great depths in circuitous underground chambers thanks to their specialized gear. Their side-slung double tanks ensure oxygen, and their fancy dive computers keep check of their remaining air. But it is the diver's guide line back to the surface that provides these daredevils the most relief from their anxiety. If they lose their way, they can simply turn around, tracking back with their lifeline to sun-drenched waves, gulps of natural air and a bobbing boat.



As a psychotherapist, I like this metaphor when considering the mind, that subterranean cavern between our ears with its secret vaults and forgotten artifacts. And as a

Christian, I like a good guide line to keep my mind from getting lost.

What can that guide line be? Many of my clients ask me about mindfulness, a regular practice of attuning oneself to the present via thoughtful breathing or an activity like coloring, walking or even eating. It sounds simple, but our minds naturally wander to laundry lists, the ticking of an air conditioning unit, irksome coworkers or childhood humiliations. Taking time with this practice strengthens the mind to better deal with intrusive thoughts and improves emotion regulation and impulse control.

Christians, whether in therapy or not, have the powerful practice of contemplative prayer to not only receive psychological benefits but also the spiritual nourishment we seek in strengthening our relationship with God. But prayer can be just as rife with the struggles that reveal themselves in any mindfulness practice. How many times have you sat to pray and watched as your mind swam to the magazine on your night table?

...The parable of the Prodigal Son provides us direction when our minds wander. The lost son who leaves home after demanding his inheritance from his father lavishes his money on prostitutes, squanders his savings and finds himself a starving hired hand on a pig farm in a faraway land. The son hungers for home in a land of famine; he returns to his father in ragged clothes; he is welcomed with a celebration. It is a story of reconciliation that consoles with the message that no matter how far we stray from the Father, no matter the sin, we will be welcomed

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Sound the horn, bishops, we're waiting:

By NCR Editorial Staff, published on June 22, 2018, at ncronline.org.

On the major issues of the day—immigration, climate change, racism, income inequality, to name a few—we are seeing extraordinary grassroots efforts to combat draconian federal policies that are the antithesis of the Beatitudes. In efforts like the renewed Poor People's Campaign, students against gun violence, and the Catholic Climate Covenant, we have seen individuals and small groups rise up to confront those who put profits above people and those who steer government budgets and agendas away from supporting the common good to supporting corporate interests and personal gain.

...These efforts engender hope. People of faith, including Catholics, have joined them. Local and decentralized efforts have increased the spiritual and moral energy of the faith community in ways we have not seen for a decade or more. The time is ripe to move these grassroots efforts to a new place in the national agenda. To do that will require firm moral leadership.

As Catholics, we look to our bishops for that kind of leadership. Our structures, traditions and our teachings point us to our bishops. If there ever was a time when the Catholic community of the United States needed firm moral leadership from its bishops, it is now. Will the bishops meet this challenge?

...This group of bishops—with individual exceptions—seems loath to fully embrace Francis' social agenda, which besides addressing immigration, highlights climate change, poverty and nonviolence. As a body, they have done precious little to implement *Laudato Si*. They pay only lip service to the critique of financial systems in *Evangelii Gaudium* and the just-released *Oeconomicae et pecuniariae quaestiones*.

...A biblical metaphor comes to mind: "If the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?" (1 Corinthians 14:8). The faithful are poised for action with their ears cocked for a clarion call. Will the

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

Bulletin: Michelle Hogan (July 1, 8, and 15), 468-3386

Kay Williams (July 22 and 29), 679-9015

Finance: Helena Wee, 520-7556, shwee@sbcglobal.net

Hospitality: Jim Davis, 328-2584

Liturgy: John Arnold, 325-1421, jsaoso@comcast.net;

Sally Benson, (408) 972-5843, red5@svpal.org

Needs Net: Roberta Kehret, 494-1488, robkehr@yahoo.com

Spiritual Education: Mary Coady, 261-9155, Jim Davis, 328-2584

... *Prodigal son, continued:*

back into his arms if we simply ask.

The physical placement and geography of the parable's plot, the journey away from home, into dissolution and back home to forgiveness, echoes strongly: It is the story of our disordered interior lives. Like the son, at any time we can decide not only to turn back toward the sacrament of reconciliation but to our interior lives. The shift is sudden. "Coming to his senses, *he thought*" (Lk 15:17). Just as the lost son first had to think and ruminate on his inheritance and what he would do with it, he just as quickly could think of how to ask for forgiveness. God provides us with our own specialized gear in the depth of our minds. No matter how deep or lost in sin or in prideful ambition we can check our senses. We can check our sense of hunger and pain that sin naturally leads us to, and we can first think our way back home. God tethers all of us to his home because we are his children and he seeks reunion.

... Prideful embarrassment and a sense of failure can keep us hungry on that pig farm. But in acknowledging our suffering we can always turn back. How many of us know the power of regular prayer but believe we do not deserve it or that we are not doing it properly or that we are not getting the results we desire from it? It is at those very moments we might recognize those pangs of hunger for our Father and return to him, wanting only what he desires for us.

So how can we integrate the lesson from this popular parable into our contemplative prayer lives? We must train our minds to always return to the Father when we wander. St. Francis offers a meditative phrase that you can try in your home or at work: "My God, my all." In a comfortable position, with eyes closed or open, marry your breath with each half of the phrase. On the in-breath take *My God* into your heart, imagining a tether to your creator, and on the out-breath release *My all* back into the world, aware that God tethers the entirety of space in union with his creation. Attempt this for several minutes, and notice how difficult it is to keep this phrase in mind. Still, "come to your senses," just as the lost son does when he wanders from his Father, and gently return to the phrase, aware that as an individual created by God you are tethered to him.

... With regular practice you will find God's graces realize themselves in other areas of your life. By becoming more mindful of your tethered relationship to God, you will become more aware that in your exterior life you can always be reconciled and ask forgiveness. ... By becoming more thoughtful, we may even prevent ourselves from acting out as the lost son did.

If we can ruminate on that which separates us from God, we can ruminate on what tethers us to God. We must simply come to our senses and think.

We need to resurrect our ideal of welcoming immigrants:

By Maureen Fiedler, a Sister of Loretto, published June 22, 2018, at www.ncronline.org.

Today, I pulled a favorite T-shirt out of my drawer and put it on because it has a message for today. It shows a drawing of Jesus, Mary and Joseph heading into Egypt. The caption on the T-shirt says "Illegal Immigrants of the Bible." I love wearing it to places like my local supermarket. I don't know if anyone reads it, or even notices it, but if they do, I hope it causes them to ask serious questions about current news stories about immigrants.

The message? Good people are often forced to flee a homeland to seek a new place of refuge. Now, of course, we have hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Central Americans and Mexicans seeking refuge by crossing our southern border from Mexico. Most are good people fleeing desperate poverty as well as violence of gangs and cartels. Yet they are meeting strong resistance and long delays even when they try to enter the United States legally.



Watching this scene on TV caused to me think back to the 19th century when my ancestors (especially my maternal ancestors from Ireland) were in a similar situation, although they came by ship. I wonder how they were greeted and how long it took to get accepted. I often wonder if they saw those infamous signs, recorded in history books,

saying "No Irish Need Apply."

So what Central Americans and Mexicans are facing today is—unfortunately—not new. We may be a "nation of immigrants," but we have often not been a nation *welcoming* immigrants.

To say this needs to change is simplistic, and perhaps a pipe dream. But welcoming the stranger is not only the moral thing to do, it's the pragmatic thing to do. Most immigrants to the United States have a positive impact on our country. They bring new talents, energy and ideas.

The tech industry is perhaps the most obvious example. According to a 2016 article in the *Washington Examiner*, "Thirty-seven percent of Silicon Valley's population are non-citizens who entered the U.S. to fill a specific job in the tech industry. Compare that to California's 27 percent of the population that is from another country and a 13 percent national average."

But, whether immigrants bring special talents or not, we need to resurrect our ideal of welcoming immigrants to the United States. It is the moral thing to do ... and it's in the finest Christian tradition.