



Corpus Christi

(The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ)

June 3, 2018

Readings

This week:

Exodus 24:3-8

Hebrews 9:11-15

Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

Next week:

Genesis 3:9-15

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

Mark 3:20-35

Psalm

I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord. (*Psalm 33*)

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

We are no longer living in a Christian world. The ages which we are pleased to call the "ages of Faith" were certainly not ages of earthly paradise. But at least our forefathers officially recognized and favored the Christian ethic of love. They fought some very bloody and un-Christian wars, and in doing so they also committed great crimes which remain in history as a permanent scandal. However, certain definite limits were recognized. Today a non-Christian world still retains a few vestiges of Christian morality, a few formulas and clichés, which serve on appropriate occasions to adorn indignant editorials and speeches. But otherwise we witness deliberate campaigns to eliminate all education in Christian truth and morality. The Christian ethic of love tends to be discredited as phony and sentimental. . . . It is pure madness to think that Christianity can defend itself with nuclear weapons. The mere fact that we now seem to accept nuclear war as reasonable is a universal scandal.

—From *Nuclear War and Christian Responsibility*, in the February 6, 1962 issue of *Commonweal* magazine

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

Primary election this Tuesday:

Tuesday, June 5, is the date of our next statewide election. Read all about the ballot measures online at <https://cavotes.org/vote/elections/ballot-measures>. If you need local election information, enter your address on Voter's Edge California at the League of Women Voters website and view your entire ballot and polling place. You can also read the LWV's recommendations at <https://lwvc.org/vote/elections/ballotrecommendations>.



Garden grooming on June 9:

Save Saturday morning, June 9, from 9:30 until noon (or any portion thereof) to get your hands dirty in the St. Thomas Aquinas church garden beds. Vicki Sullivan will be leading the troops to refresh the flowers and shrubs that surround our church. There will be compost and mulch supplied, and we will be dead-heading, planting azaleas and hydrangeas rescued from the Easter altar, and general grooming. Please come help!



COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

'I pray for Donald Trump, I do': Bishop Michael Curry addresses US divisions:

By Lauren Gambino in theguardian.com May 27, 2018.

Faith leaders working with Bishop Michael Curry to turn his sermons of love into a movement see his invitation to preach at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle as a moment of divine intervention. "God used a royal wedding to have the gospel preached probably to the largest audience at one time," said Jim Wallis, founder of the Reclaiming Jesus movement. "Bishop Curry was just being himself in that pulpit. But God made that happen in all kinds of humorous and miraculous ways." For 24 hours after the ceremony at Windsor Castle last week, Curry rivaled Pope Francis as the most recognizable faith leader in the world. . . . Then the first African American leader of the Episcopal Church returned home, to embark on a new mission. He wants to address what he and other clergy behind Reclaiming Jesus call "a dangerous crisis of moral and political leadership at the highest levels of our government and in our churches."

"My hope and prayer is that what we're really doing is helping the average Christian persons of faith find their voice," Curry told The Guardian. "We're trying to find a way to bring people together and the values that we share is our starting place for doing that."

The 65-year-old, who was born in Chicago and raised by his grandmother after his mother's death, is the descendent of slaves and sharecroppers in North Carolina. His presence at Windsor Castle was a symbolic moment for two countries riven by race and class. In his speech, Curry invoked Martin Luther King, Jr. and slavery, telling the couple: "Make of this old world, a new world."

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Reclaiming Jesus event brings its message to the White House:

By Julie Bourbon, at ncr.org, May 25, 2018.

An ebullient church service on May 24 intended to "reclaim the integrity of faith during political and moral crisis" segued into a silent candlelight procession through the capital city's downtown streets before ending in prayer and song opposite the White House. There, more than 1,000 people held up candles, simultaneously prayed aloud in multiple languages—a modern-day Pentecost—and listed to leaders of many faiths read the proclamations of *Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis*. The declaration contains six principles, including statements decrying racial bigotry, attacks on immigrants and refugees, authoritarianism, sexual violence, the normalization of lying in political life, and ethnic nationalism. The church service that began the evening featured more than a dozen leaders from evangelical, mainline Protestant, Catholic, and African-American churches, including Franciscan Fr. Richard Rohr, founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation; Jim Wallis, president and founder of Sojourners; theologian Walter Brueggemann; and the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, presiding bishop and primate of the Episcopal Church, among others. . . .

Rohr expressed the concerns that led him, at the urging of Wallis and Curry, to join the Reclaiming Jesus effort.

"We Catholics, we have such magnificent social teaching on paper," he said. "It's one of the least preached things from the pulpit in the ordinary parish, and I think the evidence is, although no one would knock it publicly, the bishops and preachers don't tend to really be invested in it. . . ."

US bishops are complicit in our political train wreck:

Abridged from an article by Michael Sean Winters, religion and politics editor for NCR, May 25, 2018, at ncronline.org.

Two recent press releases from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops highlight the fact that the nation's bishops, as a body, still have not figured out how to deal with Donald Trump, nor weighed the values at stake in this fraught political moment.

The first press release came from three committee chairmen. . . . The bishops applauded state-level action to shield religious organizations that provide foster care and adoption services from having to place children with same-sex couples. . . . I remember the pain felt in the Boston Archdiocese when Catholic Charities had to stop doing adoptions because the state refused to relent on their demand that all providers accept all parent-applicants, and the Holy See refused to budge in its insistence that it could never be in the best interest of the child to place a child with a same-sex couple.

As a factual matter, the Vatican was wrong. Virtually all social workers will tell you that there are some same-sex foster parents and adoptive parents who are magnificent and whose means, and lack of other children, permit them to handle especially challenging placements and adoptions. As a cultural matter, the Vatican's concern is not baseless, but it is coarse and needs to be fleshed out. . . . The second press release came from Cardinal Timothy Dolan in his capacity as chair of the Pro-Life Activities Committee. The cardinal applauded the administration's decision to deny Title X family planning funding to organizations that perform abortions. . . . There are several problems with his statement. First, the bishops should be a lot more careful about invoking the "money is fungible" argument because it can cut both ways. As noted, there are people who think the church should never receive money from the government when we help immigrants or provide foster care services, etc. They could deploy the "money is fungible" argument against us, too. . . . The bishops, like House Speaker Paul Ryan and most congressional Republicans, sit in their political dinghy, happy to have found another day's worth of rations, ignoring the tsunami cresting right behind them.

The time is coming when the American people will look at Donald Trump the way Nicole Kidman looked at Christopher Walken at the end of "The Stepford Wives" and say, as Kidman did: "I can do better." . . . If departing Senator Jeff Flake can figure this out, why can't our bishops? "Our presidency has been debased," the conservative Republican senator said in an address to the graduating class at Harvard Law School, "by a figure who has a seemingly bottomless appetite for destruction and division. And only a passing familiarity with how the Constitution works." The bishops need to measure the poten-

'I pray for Donald Trump, I do,' continued:

That was the message he brought to Washington on Thursday, when he linked arms with prominent progressive leaders and led hundreds of Christians in silent procession to the White House.

. . . The Reclaiming Jesus movement, like other progressive religious groups, is asking people of faith to reject policies that ban refugees and immigrants from the US and equivocations on white supremacy—without joining a political side. "We don't tell people how to vote," Curry said. "We don't tell people exactly what policies they must stand for. We identify what are the values that will guide you in your life. But the rest? That's between you and God."

The lengthy founding document lists six core principles the co-signers hope will help shift the conversation around what they believe are the core teachings of the Bible: a focus on the poor, the vulnerable and the disadvantaged. It does not mention Donald Trump by name but it does repudiate his policies and the forces unleashed by his election.

It calls on Christians to denounce the "resurgence of white nationalism and racism in our nation on many fronts, including the highest levels of political leadership," and rejects Trump's America First agenda. . . .

Curry said he had expected a strong reaction to the Reclaiming Jesus declaration. "It's a spiritual document and spiritual documents are moral and ethical statements so they have implications," he said. "We identify cultural maladies—we're not pointing the finger at anybody. We're not blaming anybody."

Asked if he prays for the president, Curry replied without reservation: "I pray for Donald Trump, I do. He's a child of God, just like the immigrant is a child of God."

If Curry had an audience with the president, he said, he would tell him the same thing he tells himself and anybody else he prays for: "Live by the practice of love for your neighbor."

"Selfish, self-centered living by any or all of us is what the Christian tradition has meant by sin all along," he said. . . .



tial cost of even being caught in the same picture frame as this man who offends every principle of democracy and the rule of law, who has now mistaken the Department of Justice for Michael Cohen, and whose narcissism apparently knows no limit. This is not a time to try and get the football as far down the field as possible on Title X funding. This is the time to step away and think deeply about how some of our more vocal bishops have been complicit in this political train wreck that has afflicted the country and imagine what they can do to repair the destruction and the division.

Dick Placone's letter to the City Council:

Last Sunday [at the annual meeting of TMC] I spoke about the RV problem on El Camino Real, defining it as a "Compassion" issue. Here is the letter I have sent to the Palo Alto City Council. I hope you will join me in sending your own message to our council (city.council@cityofpaloalto.org). Feel free to use any part of my letter you wish. Many thanks.

Greetings, Council Members,

Last Monday on my way home from Menlo Park, heading south, I counted 50 RVs parked on El Camino Real, from Embarcadero Road to Charleston Road. It appeared that all had been parked there for some time; indeed a couple were on jacks or were actually trailers unhitched from a towing vehicle.

The city has recognized that this is a serious problem, one causing potential safety issues to passing traffic as well as sanitation problems, amongst others.

However, I consider this to be a Compassion Problem, an issue that this Council is well aware of, but consistently denigrates, denegrating as well the occupants of these "homes away from home." I have learned that when it has been suggested to Council members that a real solution is possible, the following objections have been stated by sitting members: "we will be establishing a potential hepatitis camp"; or "we will be creating a venue for criminal activity"; or "the city shouldn't be spending tax dollars on homeless people like this."

Consider this: Palo Alto is nationally reputed to be one of the wealthiest cities in the country. We are renowned for having one of the most highly educated populations, with outstanding employment opportunities and more. I posit that these are the very factors that are drawing the RV dwellers to our city (and other nearby cities for that matter)—for the jobs that are being created here.

Do we know who these people are, where they come from and what they are doing during the daytime? I have heard, read and been told that most are workers here on the many construction jobs in town and on the Stanford campus; that they are the workers in our heavy tax-producing hotels, making the beds and cleaning the rooms; that they are servers in our over-the-top in prices restaurants; and most recently Stanford graduate students living off campus. It would seem to me that it is this town's very success in everything it does, except providing a wide range of housing opportunities, that has resulted in the "El Camino RV Alley".

"So where does Compassion come in?"—I hope you are asking yourselves. These are our fellow human beings, most not as fortunate as those of us who either settled here in years gone by and are now homeowner millionaires, or are wealthy business leaders or very well-paid high tech employees. The council's everlasting thirst for more and more growth, mostly consolidated in large,

lucrative business developments, and the minimum of affordable housing, are major factors in creating this issue.

We have brought this on ourselves, ladies and gentlemen of the Council. I believe it is our responsibility to resolve this problem in a manner that is compassionate to the RV dwellers, and respectful of the taxpaying citizens of this town.

You have the solution staring you in the face, if only you would collectively put your hearts and minds together and determine to resolve this problem in a manner fair to all.

What might that solution be?

I'm told the city owns a large piece of property purchased from the city of Los Altos, which is used for storage of equipment. We all know that the city controls, if not owns, hundreds of acres in the baylands. For a relatively small sum, a simple RV park or parks could be established. Hard gravel paving, a few modest restrooms with showers, plug-in power, and water and RV dumping station is all it would take. A simple system of occupant registration and a small per-night, -week, or -month charge would help defray some, if not all, of the operating costs. The occupants themselves could be organized into community "gatekeepers," keeping order and such. If this city can afford to spend over \$8 million redesigning Ross Road for a few cyclists, to the consternation of most of the residents, from what I have observed, surely it can come up with a Compassionate Fund, and get these RVs and their human occupants off the highway and into a safe place with the most basic of human amenities.

And by the way, if Stanford students are actually part of this highway population, then by all means get the university involved—it has a responsibility to resolve problems related to the campus.

Thank you for your attention to this letter. I look forward to your response and hopefully constructive action.

Respectfully submitted, Richard Placone

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