



18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 5, 2018

Readings

This week:

Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15

Ephesians 4: 17, 20-24

John 6:24-35

Next week:

1 Kings 19:4-8

Ephesians 4:30–5:2

John 6:41-51

Psalm

The Lord gave them [bread,] bread from heaven. (*Psalm 78*)

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

Thursday, August 9, 7:30 pm

TMC Board, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

Meditation is almost all contained in this one idea: the idea of *awakening* our interior self and attuning ourselves inwardly to the Holy Spirit, so that we will be able to respond to his grace. In mental prayer we must allow our interior perceptivity to be refined and purified. We must attune ourselves to unexpected movements of grace, which do not fit our own preconceived ideas of the spiritual life at all. . . .

We must be ready to cooperate not only with graces that console, but with graces that humiliate us. Not only with lights that exalt us, but with lights that blast our self-complacency. Much of our coldness and dryness in prayer may well be a kind of unconscious defense against grace. Without realizing it, we allow our nature to desensitize our souls so that we cannot perceive graces which we intuitively foresee may prove to be painful.

Meditation is then always to be associated in practice with abandonment to the will and action of God. . . .

—*Spiritual Direction and Meditation*

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

Last week of SES backpack drive:

St. Elizabeth Seton School relies on private donations and grants to support its mission of transforming the lives of children from low-income families by providing an elementary education regardless of a family's ability to pay tuition. In addition, the project to purchase backpacks and school supplies for the children for the 2018-2019 school year has one week to go.

You may make a financial contribution to the backpack program and let us do the shopping, or you can contribute backpacks and school supplies. Checks should be made out to St. Elizabeth Seton School with "backpacks" on the memo line. Or bring items to church by next Sunday. John Arnold is the coordinator and can be reached at jsaoso@comcast.net or (650) 269-2950.

Next Friday Fish Fest is August 17:

The next Friday Fish Fest is planned for August 17 in the Thomas House. We start at 6:00 pm and are finished by 8:00. In between, we enjoy a good dinner, camaraderie, and getting to know each other.

An after-dinner sing-along with guitarist Paul Prochaska will cap off the evening.

We ask for a \$5 donation for the meal, and \$2 each for a glass or wine or beer. You are free to bring a dessert to share, but we will provide fish and chips, with coleslaw on the side.



COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Pope Francis revises Catechism, teaches that death penalty is 'inadmissible':

Gerard O'Connell, America's Vatican correspondent, at america magazine.org, August 2, 2018.

Pope Francis has significantly revised the teaching on the death penalty in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, declaring that "in the light of the Gospel" the death penalty "is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person," and stating that the church works "for its abolition worldwide."

The Vatican announced this today when it released the new revised formulation of the Catechism teaching on the death penalty . . . When the Catechism was initially published in 1992, . . . it still admitted the use of the death penalty. But strong reaction from bishops and the faithful in many countries led the pope to revise the text in 1997. The revised text, however, still did not exclude the death penalty on moral grounds as Pope Francis did today. . . Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good. Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, . . . more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption. . . .

'Mini-storytellers': Japanese children pass on horror of Nagasaki bombings:

Daniel Hurst, in theguardian.com.

The 500 students at Shiroyama Elementary School gather in the assembly hall on the ninth day of every month to sing a song. This is no ordinary school anthem, however. Dear Children's Souls deals with the most traumatic chapter in the school's long history: the moment 1,400 students and 28 staff members died when the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the southern Japanese city of Nagasaki in the closing stages of the second world war.

Nearly 73 years have passed since the bombing of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945—and Hiroshima three days earlier—but the school feels a special responsibility to keep the memories alive. "Shiroyama Elementary School is situated closest to ground zero of the A-bomb compared to other elementary schools in Nagasaki," explains principal Hiroaki Takemura, adding that the hypo-center was just 1,600 feet away.

The task is becoming increasingly vital as more and more



How to be Catholic when your bishops are not:

Abridged from an article by Jennifer Fitz at ncregister.com.

The McCarrick scandals are proving to be a breaking point for many Catholics. Here we have not a man engaged in a struggle against temptation—who of us isn't?—but a man whose shamelessly predatory behavior was tacitly condoned by countless church leaders at the highest levels, and whose depraved behavior was *normal* in many clerical circles. How many loving Catholic parents have sent their sons off to seminary never imagining the ordeal of sexual harassment, molestation and lifelong moral compromise that awaited?

. . . The first step in holding onto your Catholic faith is making the decision that you will worship God alone. Our readings over the past few weeks have made it clear what God thinks of bad pastors.

. . . People become Catholic a billion different ways for a billion different reasons. . . We stay Catholic for a single reason: Because it is true. If you have never tested the evidence for the *truth* of your Catholic faith, may I suggest now is the opportune moment? Your logical reasoning won't be swayed by any sentimental attachments, you can be sure of that. . . If you make the effort, you can *know* that Catholicism consists of a reasonable, evidence-based set of beliefs. You deserve this gift. Don't settle for anything less.

But here's a challenge for you: Do you actually live as if the Catholic faith is true? We now know that many of our bishops do not. We can look around the pews and see that many ordinary Catholics do not either. We go through the motions, but our lives are basically the same as everyone

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Japanese children, . . . continued:

of the survivors who directly witnessed the events pass away. The ranks of these survivors, known as *hibakusha*, have halved over the past two decades and their average age is now 82. . . The year-six students at Shiroyama, therefore, are taking on more responsibility and being trained as "mini-storytellers." Each year, about 400 schools from across Japan send thousands of students on field trips to Shiroyama to learn about the A-bomb. After passing the school gate etched with pictures of doves, the visiting children hear the song lyrics describing how students' and teachers' lives were snuffed out "in a brief flash . . . expiring meaninglessly."

Then the sixth-graders host the visitors on a tour around the school, including the old building ruins, in an activity called "Peace Navi (navigation)." The junior storytellers tell their peers what happened and convey an overarching message of peace, says Takemura. . . .

Rediscovering the daily examen with my daughter:

by Mike Jordan Laskey, director of Life & Justice Ministries for the Diocese of Camden, New Jersey. Published at ncronline.org, July 26, 2018.

Our older daughter, who turned three this week, has a new favorite bedtime prayer tradition that my wife started with her. The kiddo calls it "Dear God," and she requests it by name most nights. "Dear God" is a recap of the day's events, highlighting moments we are thankful for. It starts with breakfast and covers all the people she saw and things she did. On her birthday, the very full list included a fish-shaped cake, a seahorse craft she made with some friends, and trips to the diner and aquarium. "Dear God" is a recent development, but our daughter has been recapping her day through prayer for quite a while. She used to do this by seamlessly integrating notable events and objects into the prayer intentions list.

For about a week last summer, for instance, she prayed for her grandparents and cousins out loud and then added the fish she had fed at a friend's pond, plus the watermelon she fed them. It's equal parts prayer and mental processing time, and it seems to relax her. I know replaying a day in my own head is one way I combat occasional bouts with insomnia.

Practitioners of Ignatian spirituality might notice in "Dear God" a hint of the daily examen, an "examination of consciousness" prayer form that St. Ignatius of Loyola describes in his manual, *The Spiritual Exercises*, which includes a meditative, gratitude-filled review of one's day. Jesuit Father Dennis Hamm. . . writes that it is akin to "going through a drawer full of stuff, feeling around, looking for something that you are sure must be in there somewhere."

Ignatius believed in the grace and power of the examen so strongly—it was a gift straight from God, he believed—it was one of the only spiritual rituals he required his brother Jesuits to practice everyday. . . .

And that's a big thing I hope for both of our daughters as they get older, that we help them grow in the practice of noticing God around them all the time. The examen will be a great gift in the midst of what will become busy, distraction-filled lives. . . .

The richest spiritual times in my life have been periods when I've practiced the daily examen, and I don't think that's a coincidence. Sometimes, especially moments after both the girls have been crying loudly at the same time, I feel like I need to do better inviting God into the stressful parts of my life.

The message of the examen, I think, is that God has been there all along and I've too often missed it. Maybe this new "Dear God" tradition will help all of us pay better attention.

