



Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 10, 2019

Readings

This week:

Isaiah 6:1–2a, 3–8

I Corinthians 15:1–11

Luke 5:1–11

Next week:

Jeremiah 17:5–8

I Corinthians 15:12, 16–20

Luke 6:17, 20–26

Psalm

In the light of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord. (*Psalm 136*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Larry Percell.

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, Waverley and Homer Streets, Palo Alto. Members of the Thomas Merton community participate in planning 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, there are return envelopes in the bulletin on the last Sunday of each month for your convenience (donations by check or cash are welcome). The donation basket is in the back of church after Mass or available by the coffeepot after Mass—or you can use the envelope to mail your donation. **Please do not put your TMC envelope in the collection baskets passed during Mass (these are for parish contributions only).**

Calendar

Monday, Feb. 11, 7:00 p.m.

TMC Liturgy Committee, Thomas House

Thursday, Feb. 14, 7:00 p.m.

TMC Board meeting, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

The attachment of the modern American to his automobile, and the symbolic role played by his car, with its aggressive and lubric design, its useless power, its otiose gadgetry, its consumption of fuel, which is advertised as having almost supernatural power--this is where the study of American mythology should begin.

Meditation on the automobile, what it is used for, what it stands for--the automobile as weapon, as self-advertisement, as brothel, as a means of suicide, etc.--might lead us at once right into the heart of all contemporary American problems: race, war, the crisis of marriage, the flight from reality into myth and fanaticism, the growing brutality and irrationality of American mores.

--*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

Blood Drive Saturday, Feb. 16:

The parish has arranged with the Stanford Blood Center to come to our parish Saturday, February 16, between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at Our Lady of the Rosary Hall (3233 Cowper Street, Palo Alto) to accept blood donations.

NOTE: You do not need a physician's consent to donate. If the nurse at the time determines there is a medical condition requiring consent, then this is the only case in which one would be required.

You can schedule an appointment in advance:
Online: www.sbcdonor.org; use Sponsor Code 2581
Phone: 650-723-7831 (for eligibility requirements)

Contact STA parishioner Chris Lundin (clundin@stanford.edu, 650-213-6640) with questions.

Fred Dietrich Memorial Mass February 16 at 2:00 p.m. (corrected time):

Longtime TMC member Fred Dietrich passed away January 1, 2019. There will be a memorial Mass celebrated on Saturday, February 16, at 2:00 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church. All are welcome.

Donate your old shoes in February:

The STA Human Concerns Committee is collecting used and/or new shoes during the month of February.



You will find a collection box placed for your convenience in the vestibule of the church.

Your shoes will be taken to DSW (Designer Shoe Warehouse) and shipped at their expense to Soles4Souls warehouses for distribution to men, women and children in need around the world. In 2012, our parish contributed 597 pairs of shoes!

We encourage you to gather your unneeded gently-used shoes and find the donation box in the church vestibule.

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, Kerry Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Mike Cummings, Jim Davis, Ken Dias, Pat Dietrich, Dick Freeman, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Fr. John Hester, Dean Judd, Hunter Kubit, Dick Jackman, 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.
[Add or subtract names by e-mailing editor Kay Williams at kaywill@pacbell.net.]

Merton scholar Michael Higgins to speak February 23 in Menlo Park:



Save the date: Saturday, February 23, at 3:00 pm to hear a talk by Prof. Michael W. Higgins entitled "Thomas Merton and Martin Luther King: Prophets for Today." Location is the Menlo Park Recreation Center at 700 Alma Street in Menlo Park.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the deaths of Merton and King in 1968, the TMC Spiritual Education Committee is bringing Professor Higgins from Connecticut to speak on Merton and Martin Luther King and what might have been had they had an in-person conversation, as they had hoped to do. Higgins says: "Both men understood the power of a vision electrified by words, a vision biblical and epic in its range and yet grounded in the real."

Higgins is Canadian-born and educated, a celebrated scholar, writer and gifted speaker. He is a leading biographer of Merton and of the Dutch priest-psychologist Henri Nouwen, a popular spiritual writer in the post-Vatican II years.

Conversation about human intelligence and consciousness, Feb. 14, at Stanford:

Krista Tippett, award-winning broadcaster, host of the *On Being* public radio show, National Humanities Medalist, and bestselling author, will lead a conversation on "Artificial Intelligence: A Deep and Reality-Based Conversation about Human Intelligence and Consciousness," on Thursday, Feb. 14, at 4:30 pm, on the Stanford campus in Tresidder Union, the Oak West room. Her co-panelists are Jerry Kaplan at the Stanford Center for Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law, and Mehran Sahami, a professor and associate chair for Education and Director of Educational Affairs in Computer Science.

The event is free and open to the public, but RSVPs are required. Contact: haascenter@stanford.edu.

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Black Lives Matter and the Catholic Church:

[By Olga Segura, *America*, February 01, 2019]

...In recent years, many religious leaders, including Catholics, have contributed to the national conversations around race. While racial justice has not been at the forefront of the public agenda of the Catholic Church, many Catholics...have encouraged church leaders to meet with activists within the [Black Lives Matter] movement...[T]here is much the Catholic Church can learn from the black citizens leading the movement.

In 2013, following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed black teenager in Florida, Alicia Garza, a civil rights activist from Oakland, Calif., wrote what she describes as a love letter to black people on Facebook: "Black people, I love you. I love us. We matter. Our lives matter." ...Ms. Garza emphasizes that the organization is part of a movement that has been around for much longer... She points to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s as an example. Unlike its predecessor, which was led by the direct action of churches and Christian leaders like the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the Black Lives Matter movement is by and large secular. There are B.L.M. chapters in England, Canada, South Africa, France and Germany. Activists within the organization have met with politicians to discuss policies to combat police brutality and launched Campaign Zero—focused on ending police brutality—and the Police Union Contract Project—which investigates the contracts given to U.S. police officers and emphasizes police accountability...

Many Catholics of color feel that issues of racial justice are not sufficiently emphasized by church leaders. The B.L.M. movement has given voice to the experiences of black individuals in the United States through its unyielding critique of white privilege and the complicity of white Americans in systems of oppression... While many individual Catholics have long worked for racial justice, the institutional response from the church has often been less obvious. In recent years, the Catholic Church in the United States has begun to acknowledge publicly many of the ways it has been complicit in systems of racism and oppression. Among those responding is Georgetown University, the oldest Catholic university in the United States. In 2016 it formed the Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation. The

goal of the working group is to present the university's history and ties to slavery. In 1838 the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, which founded Georgetown, sold 272 men, women and children whom it had earlier purchased as slaves. The working group has published a report with recommendations for ways that the university can begin to atone for its slaveholding past. These include renaming buildings, creating the Institute for the Study of Slavery and Its Legacies and dedicating a memorial to the 272 enslaved persons sold by the Jesuits.... [T]he school will offer preferential admission to students who apply and are direct descendants of the individuals the Jesuits sold. Many have described Georgetown's initiatives as the first examples of what slavery reparations in the United States might look like....

Some institutional progress is being made in the Catholic Church. Last year the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops formed the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, which was established to develop pastoral and political strategies to tackle racism in the United States. ... Last November, the U.S. bishops promulgated the church's first pastoral letter on racism since the statement "Brothers and Sisters to Us" was published in 1979. ...[It] touches on issues like the water crisis in Flint, Mich., police misconduct, racial biases in the criminal justice system and the relationship between racism and other forms of prejudice, including anti-Semitism and xenophobia. The letter also calls on Catholics to work for racial justice and proposes practical steps, including acknowledging the complicity of Catholics in the sin of racism, educating people about the nation's legacies of slavery and discrimination and working for racial justice in parishes as well as in civic and social institutions... Matthew Cressler, the author of *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migrations*, says ... while the letter recognizes that racism is one of the United States' historical sins, it fails to define explicitly the role of the Catholic Church and white Catholics in this sin...He adds ...that the Catholic Church has a lot to learn from one of the most important racial justice movements since the 1960s. ...

The three million African-American Catholics in the United States make up just over 4 percent of the U.S. Catholic population. While the number of black U.S. Catholics might be small, their faith is rich, and their

(Black Lives Matter....continued on page 4.)

The tragedy of abortion absolutism and how the pro-life movement can respond:

[By the Editors, *America Magazine*, 1/31/19]

The stark reality of abortion entered public consciousness this week to a degree not seen in years. Americans were just beginning to understand how radical New York's Reproductive Health Act, passed on Jan. 22, really was. At the same time, a Virginia state delegate acknowledged, during a legislative hearing, that the bill she had proposed to loosen regulation of late-term abortions would in fact allow abortion up until the moment of delivery. The governor of Virginia, himself a pediatric neurosurgeon, addressed the same issue on a radio show. He explained that it was more likely that such a case, involving a baby with severe deformities or who was expected to be nonviable, would result in a delivery but that the child would only be resuscitated if the mother and family desired. His clinical discussion of choosing to allow an infant to die shocked many. And while it did not attract as much attention, the governor of Rhode Island vowed to sign a similar bill in her state.

As we pointed out earlier this month, with *Roe v. Wade* under potential threat at the Supreme Court, pro-choice activists are pushing to have its effects codified into state law—and sometimes trying to expand access to abortion at the same time. This challenge calls for careful discernment from the pro-life movement. The fact that some consciences are being woken to recognize the tragedy of abortion is an opportunity for pro-lifers to broaden the circle of those who are willing to support pregnant women and be concerned for unborn children.

Here are three ways to engage this challenge constructively:

First, take great care to be clear, accurate and fair in describing the bad effects of these laws. They are shocking enough without any exaggeration. Also, veterans of pro-life work are not surprised that the controversies over these laws are already being described in terms of “attacks” on the politicians arguing for them. While there is no easy way to achieve fair media coverage of the moral concerns about abortion, it is still important to do what is possible to avoid the most predictable media bias. Some commentators immediately equated the Virginia governor's remarks to “infanticide,” which the governor described as a bad-faith interpretation—and that allowed the news cycle to turn to parsing the criticism of the governor rather than keeping the focus on the moral question.

Second, be proactive about acknowledging and engaging the best possible motives behind even these very bad laws and resist the temptation to demonize those who support them. Many pro-choice advocates point out—accurately—that the late-term abortions to

which these laws expand access are rare and usually connected to tragic diagnoses of fetal abnormality, maternal risk or the expectation that a child will die shortly after birth. Instead of relying solely on blunt, accurate descriptions of the violence of late-term abortions, pro-lifers should give even more emphasis to compassionate care for both mother and child in these terrible circumstances. Options such as perinatal hospice, which provides support and care for the mother, infant and family in situations where a child is expected to die before or shortly after birth, should be much better known. Efforts need to be made to guarantee that they are presented as part of the standard of care and resourced well enough to be available wherever needed. Too often, silence about these possibilities leads to the false choice between late-term abortion and “forcing” a mother to give birth.

Third, legislative efforts to defeat and reverse these laws should be paired with opportunities to reach across the aisle and work for reforms that will help expectant parents and make it easier for them to choose to bring their children into the world. This is not a retreat from the effort to protect unborn children in law—it is a recognition that pro-lifers should be willing to use every practical means to support and defend the dignity of life. If legal limits on abortion are connected to increases in support for parental leave and protections against pregnancy discrimination, they can potentially attract a much wider base of support. Such an approach is not only a chance for real policy improvements, but also a potential opening to win minds and hearts to recognize the value of every human life at all stages of development. #

(Black Lives Matter, continued from page 3.)

stories and perspectives are an intrinsic part of the church. All the black Catholics I [the author] spoke with hope that the church will continue to change and grow in its advocacy against racism. Many suggested practical steps: transparency and concrete follow-up when releasing documents about the church's complicity in racism; Catholic leaders and clergy explicitly, consistently and continually calling out systems of oppression within the United States and white people's role in perpetuating racism. ... And, finally, almost everyone I spoke with agreed that the Catholic Church will not succeed in its work toward racial reconciliation unless the hierarchy enters into dialogue with the Black Lives Matter movement...[One lifelong black Catholic woman], while grateful for the groundbreaking strides made at Georgetown,...says that the church overall must always challenge itself to do more. She believes a good next step would be entering into dialogue with activists within the movement. “I don't see how the church can remain outside something as significant as Black Lives Matter,... “It's a Christlike movement.” #