



Third Sunday of Lent

March 24, 2019

Readings

This week:

Exodus 3:18–a, 13–15

1 Corinthians 10:1–6, 10–12

Luke 13:1–9

Next week:

Joshua 5:9a, 10–12

2 Corinthians 5:17–21

Luke 15:1–3, 11–32

Psalm

The Lord is kind and merciful. (*Psalm 103*)

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, 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

Friday, March 29, 7:00—8:30 pm STA Sing-A-Long with guitarist Paul Prochaska, Thomas House Living Room. All are welcome!

From Thomas Merton

Do everything you can to avoid the noises and the business of men. Keep as far away as you can from the places where they gather to cheat and insult one another, to exploit one another, to laugh at one another, or to mock one another with their false gestures of friendship. Be glad if you can keep beyond the reach of their radios. Do not be bother with their unearthly songs. Do not read their advertisements.

The contemplative life certainly does not demand a self-righteous contempt for the habits and diversions of ordinary people. Nevertheless, no man who seeks liberation and light in solitude, no man who seeks spiritual freedom, can afford to yield passively to all the appeals of a society of salesmen, advertisers, and consumers. There is no doubt that life cannot be lived on a human level without certain legitimate pleasures. But to say that all the pleasures which offer themselves to us as necessities are now “legitimate” is quite another story.

—*New Seeds of Contemplation*

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

Heart & Home Collaborative dinner March 28:

Thursday, March 28 has been selected as our parish last meal of the Heart and Home Collaborative winter shelter season. The Human Concerns Committee is calling all parishioners who would like to contribute a little something homemade--chili, soup, salad, cake, chicken dish, veggie dish--whatever you prefer.

It's a fun way to participate helping these ladies and everyone is welcome to stay and share the meal at the current site at Unitarian Universalist Church.

Give us a call so we can get plans underway! It's a great Lenton project for you and families. Call Terry 650-714-2131.

Share Lent with a reflective community April 6:

Lenten Morning of Reflection with Sr. Marilyn Wilson, BVM, Saturday, April 6, 9:00 am - 12:00 noon, at St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center, 1095 Channing Ave., Palo Alto



Sr. Marilyn Wilson is an educator, spiritual director and retreat facilitator. She believes that in order to deepen our spiritual lives we must find time for reflection and solitude.

Sharing with companions on this journey often helps. On April 6, she will guide us in an informal structure of prayer and contemplation, opening spiritual space as we approach Easter.

Sr. Marilyn has an MTS in Theology from the Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, CA and a certificate in Spiritual Direction from Mercy Center. (MA English Communications)

In addition to her spiritual companioning, Sr. Marilyn is an active member of the Catholic Network to End Human Trafficking—Diocese of San Jose (CHEHT) and No Traffick Ahead (NTA), for which she provides presentations and educational materials around the issue of ending human trafficking. As a peace and justice advocate for women and children, she is particularly interested in addressing violence against women and children in any form.

All are welcome. Breakfast refreshments (coffee, bagels, fruit) will be served.

Taizé prayer March 26 at OLR:

Taizé prayer creates a time for connecting with the Spirit through silence, melodic chant and inspirational readings before a candle-lit altar.

During these last weeks of Lent, find peace and joy in Taizé at Our Lady of the Rosary church on Tuesday evenings, March 26, April 2 and 9 at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome.

Lenten Centering Prayer on Saturday morns:

Give yourself the gift of sacred time and space this Lenten season. Come to the Thomas House Library for this weekly one-hour prayer session on Saturday mornings during Lent from 9 -- 10 am. Dates remaining are March 30, April 6 and 13.

All are welcome. Books on contemplation, centering prayer and the spiritual journey will be available. No registration needed and the session is free.

If you can't make all the Saturdays, come when you can. Facilitator is Pat Clough, Centering Prayer practitioner. Contact her at pathclough@gmail.com if you have questions.

Collecting books for Seton School:

Thank you to all donors and collection helpers last weekend for the purchase of new books for 2nd graders at St Elizabeth Seton school! Total to date is \$876!

Your contributions will purchase a variety of books for each 2nd grader to read this summer to help them maintain reading skills and to explore new areas of interest.

Watch for photographs of the happy students enjoying their new books at the end of the school year. --

—The STA Human Concerns Committee

Visit STA during Lent on Wednesday nights:

In addition to the daily open hours here at STA church (7:15 am till 5:00 pm every weekday), during Lent the church is open on Wednesdays from 5:00 till 7:00 pm.

Confessions (the Sacrament of Reconciliation) will be heard and Adoration and Benediction are celebrated during those last two open hours. Take advantage of this opportunity to deepen your Lenten prayers.

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, and T. J. Wooten. [Add or subtract names by e-mailing editor Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net.]

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

March means TMC Membership renewal:



Thomas Merton Center (TMC) membership materials have been sent or given to all current TMC members.

This Vatican II –inspired lay community has been in existence since 1995 and welcomes all who are interested in being part of an independent intentional faith community at home in the Catholic Church.

If you would like to become a member of TMC, a membership application form is available in the church vestibule.

The Thomas Merton Center is a membership-based non-profit religious education organization required by its bylaws to register its membership annually. Membership fees are minimal—\$15 per individual or \$30 per family. Your choice to become a member helps to keep this Catholic, lay-led, progressive faith community active.

Your membership shows your support for sustaining the Sunday 8:45 a.m. Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas church, the adult spiritual education programs, and educational opportunities at St. Elizabeth Seton School in Palo Alto.

Please contact Kay Williams for more information: kaywill@pacbell.net, 650-270-4188.

Proper sorting of waste is faltering here:

We are all urged please to be mindful of where we place waste here at STA when we clean up after hospitality or other events in the Thomas House.

There is a continuing problem where the Recycle or Compost waste bins are contaminated with materials that don't belong in those categories. The City of Palo Alto conducts audits on the waste bins and issues significant fines to our parish for non-compliance. In addition to being environmentally responsible, none of us wants the Sunday collection monies to be used to pay off fines!



All the paper products used during post-Mass coffee and doughnuts events are compostable and should be put in the green compost bin. Paper products that are contaminated with food also should go into the green compost bin (even the doughnut boxes from Happy Do-nuts). Let's get it right!

Nationalism...continued from page 4.)

moved back to Independence, Missouri, and refused to take money for speeches. Is there a way to codify his example?

Both the left and the right turn to celebrities to bring the spotlight to a particular cause. I adore Meryl Streep as an actress. ... But I do not give one whit what she thinks about abortion or the environment. I am glad Angelina Jolie cares about various worthy causes, but she is an actress, not an expert. The list could go on.

Greasing sociocultural and political wheels with cash or sex or other things of value is nothing new. In the mid-17th century, Arabella Churchill caught the eye of the future James II, and bore him four illegitimate children, long before her brother John came to the Duke's notice and preferment. Ulysses Grant was as corrupt a president as any president we have had, yet he remained a national hero. Jack Kennedy basked in the friendship of the Rat Pack and the more-than-friendship of Marilyn Monroe.

I am not advocating for Puritanism. But only in our own time do we pretend that the kids of rich people who get into Harvard — thank you, Jared Kushner — got there because of their merit. Indeed, wealth itself used to be seen as an accident of birth, not a sign of merit, and that prior moral calculus was far more accurate and ennobling.

So here we are, beset by the violence and racism of white nationalism and the corruption and greed of America's rich and uber-rich class. We look for an alternative and, frankly, only one name leaps to mind: Pope Francis. He is the most radical figure of our times, the most determinedly countercultural. He cares not a whit for status and he wishes the church he leads were a poor church. He preaches against violence and calls for dialogue as the antidote to violence on an almost weekly basis.

He doesn't fulfill the wish list of liberal Western Catholics and he drives conservative Western Catholics bonkers. But, after a week like this one, I am so comforted to belong to a church that has someone like him as its leader. As another friend wrote me this week, "We need more Pope Francis and less Donald Trump." Amen.

[Michael Sean Winters covers the nexus of religion and politics for NCR.]

Bulletin submissions must be e-mailed by Thursday noon or phoned by Thursday, 9:00 pm, to: Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net, (650) 270-4188,

Nationalism and corruption:

[By Michael Sean Winters, *National Catholic Reporter*, 3/20/19]

A friend posted a note on his Facebook page the other day: "This has been a really bad few days in the world. We seem caught between the violence and hatred of the New Zealand terrorist and the greed and corruption of the college admissions system." As far as the news cycle went, yes, it felt like we were caught, but are we caught in terms of politics?

The murders in two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, were horrifying but not baffling. The perpetrator issued a manifesto explaining himself. That manifesto was filled with conspiracy theories and nonsense of the kind we have come to expect from white nationalists: ... But the manifesto was not the work of a crazy person so much as it was the work of a person swept up in great evil.

Americans have largely assumed we were immune to nationalism because the very diversity of the country's population made it an improbable vehicle for political success. Yes, white Anglo-Saxon Protestants were a kind of "ruling class" for many years, but by the Second World War, that is, in our lifetimes, the country had become a hodgepodge, although divisions along racial lines persisted even while ethnic differences blended in the suburbs. ...

The only way for nationalism to gain currency, then, was to link it to religion or race. British nationalism, forged in the 18th century, wedded itself to Protestantism. ...

The first iteration of nationalism in the future United States was steeped in this rejection of Catholicism, and anti-Catholicism remained a kind of recessive gene in American culture, found in the hateful ideology of the Ku Klux Klan, for example, but also in highbrow pulpits like Marble Collegiate Church into the last half of the 20th century.

The resurgent nationalism of our time has linked itself to race and until Donald Trump started winning primaries in 2016, no one really thought it would be possible to mainstream this odious ideology. We must stipulate that the ideology, to say nothing of the actions, of the killer in Christchurch is far, far more extreme than the ideology of the president, but they are in the same family, and they resist the same liberal democratic norms that have traditionally served to ameliorate racial hatreds, not stoke them.

The killer took his guns into a mosque and killed more than four dozen people, and Trump condemned the slaughter. Yet... in an interview with Breitbart, the president warned darkly that the military, the police and "the bikers," that is, the people with guns, supported him and things would get ugly if these armed groups

had to take on Trump's political opposition.

Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would hear such a threat from a president. It is shocking, absolutely shocking, that Republican members of Congress did not immediately distance themselves from this thuggish language and demand the president retract it. The fact that they did not confirms that white nationalist thuggery is now thoroughly mainstreamed. It is the responsibility of decent people to reject it with all of our might.

The college admission scandal showed a different ugliness in humankind, the pervasive corruption and greed that dozens of affluent Americans thought was acceptable, the recognition that many thousands more parents undertake similar efforts to advance their kids' prospects by legal means, and the irresistible conclusion that the rich in America do not think the rules apply to them.

One of the things about this scandal that people had a hard time getting their head around was the fact that these kids were from fabulously wealthy families. They did not need a diploma to guarantee financial security. Why then commit fraud to get them into an elite school?

"Money is but a small part" of class and privilege in America, psychology professor Paul Piff told Vox. "Another big part of that is belonging to the right clubs, knowing the right things to do when you go to a restaurant, knowing the right kinds of restaurants to go to, having read the right kinds of books. An education is a marker of all sorts of important forms of privilege that are really, really valued."

The Vox article, by Anna North, goes on to dissect various misconceptions about merit and money in our society and how both converge to confer status, issues discussed brilliantly last year by Matthew Stewart in *The Atlantic*.

Unlike white nationalism, the cultural and political left is as prone to corruption and greed as the right. I recall discussing the Lewinsky scandal in 1998 with friends who wondered why President Bill Clinton was not paying a higher price. I remember saying, "I think we all knew the president had sex with women other than his wife when we elected him. They are throwing new mud at him, but it is just blending in." Then I added, "Now, if they found evidence of venality or something new, something we did not previously know about him, that would cause us to reassess."

I spoke too soon. The Clintons used the post-presidency to make millions. The Obamas are doing the same. The Bushes came from money, but that did not prevent George W. from hitting the lecture circuit, where he has made more than \$20 million in speaking fees.

Harry S. Truman, bless his heart, left the White House,

(Nationalism...continued on page 3.)