



Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 7, 2019

Readings

This week:

Isaiah 43:16–21

Philippians 3:8–14

John 8:1–11

Next week:

Isaiah 50:4–7

Philippians 2:6–11

Luke 22:14–23:56

Psalm

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy. (*Psalm 126*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. 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

Monday, April 8, 7:00 pm

TMC Liturgy Committee, Thomas House library

Saturday, April 13, 10 am-12pm

Garden grooming at STA church grounds

From Thomas Merton

There is a huge sense of desperation running through this whole society, with its bombs and its money and its deathwish. We are caught in the ambiguities of a colossal sense of failure in the very moment of the most phenomenal success. We have everything we ever claim to have wanted, and yet we are more dissatisfied than we have ever been.

People are eating their hearts out with fury and self-hate, just when they have all the money and all the leisure and all the opportunity, apparently, to really live. They find that the kind of life everyone dreams of is in fact impossible. They cannot face leisure. They cannot handle prosperity.

I think we would be happier in a real crisis, instead of in a constant series of imaginary ones that we cannot possibly live with. Perhaps this unconscious sense of unreality will finally drive us all into a real cataclysm, just to have the relief of getting away from fictions and imaginations!

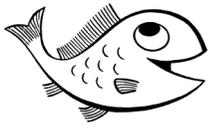
--Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander

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

Friday Fish Fest, April 12, 6:00 pm:



Fish Fest! Tasty breaded fish filets and tangy Asian cole slaw served at the Thomas House on Friday, April 12, at 6 p.m. Many thanks to people who generously

bring snacks and desserts to share as well. All this for only \$5 per person, plus \$2 for a beer or generous glass of wine. Enjoy this satisfying meal with parishioners from all three STA churches, chat and laugh together.

MUST RSVP: Helen Baumann, 650-327-9236, hbbau-mann@aol.com, or Kay Williams, 650-270-4188, kay-will@pacbell.net.

Garden grooming April 13:

It is time again to do cleanup in the STA garden beds. Bring your gardening gloves and perhaps a weeding tool or clippers to the church on Saturday, April 13, from 10 am till noon. This is a communal activity, and



all are welcome. Bring a grandchild, a neighbor, or friends who like the outdoors. It's casual and fun and satisfying to see the perked up plants and beds.

Save the date for Seton Golf May 6:



Seton Scramble for Kids May 6!

Play golf on the renowned Stanford Golf Course and support Seton School students at the 24th Annual Seton Scramble for Students on Monday, May 6th.

Seton School empowers children of low-income families to reach their full potential--helped by the monies raised from the golf registration fees.

In addition to the golf, there is food: Coupa Café catering, food, wine, beverages. Awards and a Silent & Live Auction cap off the day's golfing exertions.

Proceeds will directly support St. Elizabeth Seton School students.

For more information: email Carmel Caligaris at ccaligaris@setonpaloalto.org.

Register at: www.setonpaloalto.org. **Early Bird Registration Deadline is April 12!**

Contact bulletin editor Kay Williams at kaywill@pacbell.net, or 650-270-4188, as early as possible in the week when you are sending a notice for the bulletin.

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 (in St. Catherine's Corner, outside the restroom).

The Thomas Merton Center is a membership-based nonprofit 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: kay-will@pacbell.net, 650-270-4188.

PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, 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

Democratic candidates talking about their faith:

[By Michael O'Loughlin, *America*, 3/25/19]

As Democrats continue campaigning for the 2020 presidential primary season, some candidates appear to be highlighting issues of faith as they seek to appeal to a wider swath of voters.

During an appearance on "Morning Joe" on March 20, **Pete Buttigieg**, the mayor of South Bend, Ind., responded to a question about his religious views by talking about his own faith and what he sees as a distortion of Christianity among U.S. conservatives.

"I think the time has come for more of a religious left to emerge in our country that lets people know that they are not alone when they look at faith and think that it teaches us to reach out to others, to humble ourselves, to take care of the immigrant and the prisoner and frankly, the sex worker," said Mr. Buttigieg, who at 37 is among the first of the so-called Millennial generation to take steps toward a presidential run.

"Literally, Jesus spends his time with sex workers, among others. Lepers," continued Mr. Buttigieg, who though not Catholic, told *The New Yorker* that he used an "Ignatian" process of discernment when considering a presidential run. "And here we have this totally warped idea of what Christianity ought to be like when it comes into the public sphere that's mostly about exclusion, which is the last thing that I imbibe when I take in scripture in church."

Mr. Buttigieg attended a Catholic high school in South Bend and both his parents were professors at the University of Notre Dame. When asked if he experienced tension with Christian teaching because he is gay, he said he and his husband celebrated their wedding at their Episcopal church and feel welcome, though he added, "Certainly going to Catholic school you experience those tensions."

During a CNN town hall appearance on Mar. 19, Massachusetts **Senator Elizabeth Warren** recalled her time teaching religious education to children at her Methodist church and reflected on the passage from the Gospel of Matthew in which Jesus tells his followers that how they respond to the poor and those in need is what will determine their fate in the afterlife.

"What I hear in that is two things that guide me every day," said Ms. Warren, riffing on a story found in Matthew 25, which she accidentally referred to as Matthew 26. "The first is there is God, there is value in every single human being. Every single human being. And the second is that we are called to action.

"It says, 'You saw something wrong; you saw somebody who was thirsty; you saw somebody who was in prison,'" she continued. "You saw their face. You saw

somebody who was hungry, and it moved you to act. I believe we are called on to act."

Sister Simone Campbell, a social justice activist with the lobbying group Network, told *America* that when she counsels Democrats on how to speak to their religious values, she sometimes hears that they feel too vulnerable and prefer to stick to talk of policy.

"They're way more engaging when they speak from the heart than when they talk about academic policies," said Sister Campbell, who spoke at the 2012 Democratic National Convention. "I love policy, but it never convinces anybody...."

In an interview with Religion News Service in October, New Jersey **Senator Cory Booker** talked about being raised "very much in the black church tradition" and how the values he learned then animate his life today.

"The life of Jesus is very impactful to me and very important to me. He lived a life committed to dealing with issues of the poor and the sick. The folks that other folks disregard, disrespect or often oppress. He lived this life of radical love that is a standard that I fail to reach every single day but that really motivates me in what I do," Mr. Booker said.

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, who is Jewish, so frequently invoked Pope Francis on the campaign trail in 2016 that he inspired an online quiz challenging people to distinguish between his words and the pope's. ...

Writing in *The Atlantic*, Peter Beinart noted that neither former Texas Congressman **Beto O'Rourke** nor New York **Senator Kirsten Gillibrand** mentioned "God" in their campaign's opening messages. (Then again, neither did Ms. Warren nor Mr. Sanders.)

"Today's white liberals don't only talk about faith less than their predecessors did. They talk about it in a strikingly different way," Mr. Beinart wrote, pointing to passages where religion is held by some politicians as a force that divides rather than unites.

The number of Democrats who identify as religious is shrinking, according to the Public Religion Research Institute. According to a 2017 report, 40 percent of Democrats claim no religious affiliation.

Americans as a whole are also becoming less tied to traditional religion.

According to recently released research, the percentage of Americans who claim no religion is now more than 23 percent. That means the two biggest "religious" groups in the United States are Catholics and those with no religion.

But for Sister Campbell, urging those in political life to speak about faith is about more than trying to win votes. Instead, she said, it provides them with the language to express values they hold dear... #

Scarlet Fever:

[By C. Colt Anderson & Christopher M. Bellitto, *Commonweal*, 4/1/19]

As former seminary professors, we have looked upon the ...revelations about clergy sex abuse, cover-ups, and institutional infighting with the same disgust and sadness as our sisters and brothers—but we are not surprised... [W]e know that seminaries have played a significant role in the church’s current crisis...

Clericalism in seminary formation...is a systemic and widespread problem. ...Pope Francis has repeatedly targeted clericalism as the great enemy of ordained ministry today. You can easily see the career-climbers he warns about in seminaries. If you want to learn how to work your way into the clerical caste, watch these men. They are learning Italian, wearing cufflinks and cassocks, and don’t at all mind being called “Father,” even though they are still in studies. Along with our colleagues in other formation programs, we have easily singled out seminarians with scarlet fever: while there may be few vocations to the priesthood, there are plenty of ambitious young men aiming for a bishop’s miter.

Clericalism can be thought of as a type of exceptionalism. Seminarians soon learn that the rules and standards, such as mastery of course material, do not really apply to them. As lay faculty members we have both been told, “You don’t vote on our advancement or ordination,” which falls just short of saying “so you don’t matter.” ...

Seminarians know that, given the shortage of priests in the United States, it won’t be long after they’re ordained that they’ll be pastors with a parish of their own. We often heard conversations in the lunchroom that indicated as much: “When I’m pastor, I’m going to put my place on the map.” We heard very little talk of service or shared leadership, collegial relations with parish councils, or facilitating the talents of parishioners...

Seminarians are fed a consistent message: their role is to rule over the laity and the religious as a result of their ontological change at ordination, not as a result of their virtue, knowledge, or model behavior. They are being trained to be autocratic bosses, not servant leaders.

One suggested reform, then, is to make an explicit effort to keep seminarians as the lay people they are. The goal of a seminarian’s path is ordination, but until ordination to the diaconate, that seminarian is a lay man. Why are they wearing cassocks and a Roman collar before then? ...This practice amounts to training in clerical condescension and strutting more often than not. ...

But an even more important reform in seminary education and, in turn, parish life, would be to mix men and women in classes...Separating men and women can lead to hypermasculinity and a focus on the “otherness” of priests. This was especially fostered during John Paul II’s papacy, with its near-cult of the priesthood. It also contributes to a related problem nearly as long-standing as the structured church itself: institutional misogyny.... It only takes a few minutes of observing these men in

social situations to realize many have no idea how to interact professionally with women....

Having women and men sit side by side in formation programs also offers significant intellectual and spiritual benefits. Surely a woman’s voice in a classroom discussion of Scripture will expose a seminarian to ideas and perspectives not his own...Good priestly formation means men must learn to interact with lay men and women in healthy, professional, and respectful ways. This formation can start in classroom learning as fellow students. Seminary training should also deliberately include supervised apostolic experiences under a lay person’s authority.

There must also be sisters along with married and single people teaching their specialties (and paid a living wage with medical benefits so that they can support a family).

This leads to another suggested reform: the professional opinions of religious sisters and lay professors, professionals, and supervisors must be taken into real account when voting on whether a seminarian will proceed in formation and eventually to ordination. Their input must be deliberative and not merely consultative—that is, it must really count. ... It must be clear to the bishop that even if canon law says he can do what he wants, that may be a bad idea if all or most of the board and formation team vote against a candidate...

We believe a further step should be taken as well: seminaries should not be strictly and exclusively under the control of the bishop. There needs to be a deliberative board consisting of members of the laity and religious that can regularly and independently audit the seminaries to ensure compliance with standards... If the bishop fails to do as he should, his right to govern the seminaries needs to be taken away from him and given to a prudent person.

...The laity in every diocese should have a formal role in ending the practice of moving unfit men from seminary to seminary until they find one that will testify they are worthy of ordination...There is a policy requiring a two-year period after a seminarian is formally dismissed before he can enter another program, but because seminaries rarely formally dismiss men, technically the rule is rarely violated. The failure to formally dismiss students allows bishops to move them immediately to other seminaries...

Make no mistake: seminaries made sense when they were created at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, but they are less than a quarter as old as the church itself. Their programs must not be set in stone, as unyielding as the fortresses where they are currently housed. Seminaries still have a role to play; they should not be abolished. But they should no longer be factories for clericalism, elitism, and misogyny, as they too often still are. It is long past time for fundamental reform. #

[C. Colt Anderson, is professor of Christian Spirituality at Fordham University. He taught at Chicago’s Mundelein Seminary (1999–2008) and Washington Theological Union, where he also served as the Vice President of Academic Affairs (2008–2012). He was a member of two seminary visitations in 2005. Christopher M. Bellitto, is professor of History at Kean University, and taught at New York’s St. Joseph’s Seminary/Dunwoodie and its lay Institute of Religious Studies (1995–2001). He was part of a contentious layoff of faculty at Dunwoodie.]