



Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 19, 2019

Readings

This week:

Acts of the Apostles 14:21–27

Revelation 21:1–5a

John 13:31–33a, 34–35

Next week:

Acts of the Apostles 15: 1–2, 22–29

Revelation 21: 10–14, 22–23

John 14: 23–29

Psalm

I will praise your name forever, my king and my God. (*Psalm 145*)

Today

Today's presider is Fr. Kevin Ballard, S.J.

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

Sunday, May 19, 11:00 a.m.	TMC Annual Meeting & Brunch, Thomas House Basement Hall (<i>change of venue due to weather</i>) ←
Monday, May 20, 7:00 pm	TMC Spiritual Education Committee, Thomas House
Sunday, May 26, 8:45 a.m.	Mass at Seton Auditorium, 1095 Channing Ave., PA

From Thomas Merton

There is nothing more tragic in the modern world than the misuse of power and action to which men are driven by their own Faustian misunderstandings and misapprehensions. We have more power at our disposal today than we have ever had, and yet we are more alienated and estranged from the inner ground of meaning and of love than we have ever been. The result of this is evident. We are living through the greatest crisis in the history of man; and this crisis is centered precisely in the country that has made a fetish out of action and has lost (or perhaps never had) the sense of contemplation. Far from being irrelevant, prayer, meditation, and contemplation are of the utmost importance in America today...If our prayer is the expression of a deep and grace-inspired desire for newness of life...God will act in us and through us to renew the Church by preparing, in prayer, what we yet cannot yet imagine or understand.

--Contemplation in a World of Action

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

Capriles team edits coming TMC bulletins:

Since Michelle Hogan moved to San Jose, the editing of the TMC Bulletin has been solely in the hands of Kay Williams. Kay is very pleased to welcome to the Bulletin Team the team of Margaret Capriles and her son Bob Capriles.

Bob and Margaret will edit the next two Sunday bulletins, May 26 and June 2. If you have notices or articles to suggest, please email them at their emails:

Bob Capriles: bob_capriles2002@yahoo.com

Margaret Capriles: caprilesm@gmail.com

Lamott and Dear in conversation May 20:

Monday, May 20, 7:00pm - 9:00pm
Grace Cathedral, San Francisco

An Evening with Anne Lamott reading from her new book "Almost Everything" & Conversing with Rev. John Dear "On Peace and Nonviolence".

In her profound and funny book, Lamott calls for each of us to rediscover the nuggets of hope and wisdom that are buried within us that can make life sweeter than we ever imagined. Divided into short chapters that explore life's essential truths, *Almost Everything* pinpoints these moments of insight as it shines an encouraging light forward. Anne Lamott is the New York Times best-selling author of *Almost Everything*; John Dear is a long time peace activist, priest, teacher of nonviolence, coordinator of Campaign Nonviolence, and author of many books. Archbishop Desmond Tutu has nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Tickets are \$25; sponsor is Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service, <http://www.paceebene.org>

Send a kid to CYO Camp this summer:

Hard to believe, but summer is just around the corner.

For sisters Gwen Connolly and Karen Vetter, that means finding the funds to send 30 kids from St. Elizabeth Seton School to CYO Summer Camp. These kids have big dreams and talents—but few resources.

Funds needed: \$300 per camper.

The total cost for camp is \$850 per person for seven days. Each child's family pays a portion and camper-ship funds cover the remaining 65%. Your contribution, big or small, will make a difference. Donations are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to: CYO Camp Scholarships.
Memo line: St. Elizabeth Seton School students

Mail to: Eddie Caumeran, Catholic Charities, 990 Eddy Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Online donation: sendakidtocycocamp.com.

Fr. Percell's assignment for us:

Last week, Fr. Larry Percell challenged us to read specific Gospel chapters: John 20 and Luke 5. Fr. Percell will be celebrating the 8:45 Mass on Sunday, June 9. Get your reading done, and then ask him why he chose those two chapters for us.

Progress on STA stairs:

By close of day on May 8, the heavy construction on the front stairs of St. Thomas Aquinas church was done. Jan Dedek has chronicled the progress, with pictures, too. (Pictures not included here.)

He says: "All went smoothly. They started pouring cement around 8:00 am, and were all done before 10:30.

In the first picture is the actual pouring, with the cement mix truck parked around the corner on Homer St, together with the cement pump.

If you look at the last two pics you can see the plywood nailed on the porch floor and then waterproofed later. Also you see four pipes sticking up, that are holes for the railing anchors. The white pipes above ground are the plugs so that we do not get dirt in them.

Now our workers have only some minor cleanup detail and then they have to wait for the granite and the tiles—both are expected to arrive on 5/24."

We hope to be back in the church before July 6!

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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, 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, Patricia Markee, Nancy Marty, Maureen Mooney, Hayden Pastorini, Alicia Placone-Combetta, Paul Prochaska, Anne Rush, Priya Smith, Bernice Sullivan, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, Tom Williams and T. J. Wooten. [Add or subtract names by e-mailing editor Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net.]

Please join us after Mass in the St. Albert Hospitality Center for coffee and donuts. We especially encourage newcomers or those passing through town to stop by for food and fellowship. Today hospitality will be shared with the St. Albert 9:00 am Mass community, as the TMC Annual Meeting starts today at 11:00 am. (see Calendar on page 1)

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Merton's counsel for Trump and us:

[By Daniel P. Horan, *National Catholic Reporter*,
5/15/19]

...The ever-widening gap between Trump's self-presentation and reality has returned my attention to one of the best-known contributions the late Trappist monk Thomas Merton made to Catholic spirituality in the 20th century, namely, the distinction between what he called the "true self" and the "false self." Drawing on the insights of his intellectual predecessors, such as the medieval Franciscan theologian Blessed John Duns Scotus and the great 19th-century Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, Merton held that each of us has a true identity — who we are in the most foundational sense — and that true identity is intrinsic, inalienable, unique and unrepeatable. Scotus called this *haecceitas* ("this"-ness); Hopkins called this "insecape."

In his 1961 book *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Merton wrote, "The secret of my identity is hidden in the love and mercy of God." The true self bears a kind of interiority, but it is not exclusively of our making. It is that identity that God loves into existence; it is who we are at our barest and most basic core. It is that selfhood that God knows in its entirety, even when we struggle to know ourselves. Which is why Merton says: "Therefore I cannot hope to find myself anywhere except in Him."

While each of us has a "true self" known to God, few of us actively seek God and therefore seek to discover who we really are. Instead, we succumb to the myth that we are insufficient as we are or unworthy of love, including the love of God.

So we construct "false selves," masks we present to the world, identities that reflect who it is we think we should be or believe that others want us to be. And we seek the affirmation, respect, assurance and praise that gives us the sense our "false self" is real. But it is always illusory and unreal.

In an essay published in his collection *Raids on the Unspeakable*, Merton unpacks the dangers that come with our obsession with the construction of false selves, that labor of ego and projection that attempts to cover over our sense of inadequacy or self-consciousness made all the more acute by the pressures of our modern society.

"Now if we take our vulnerable shell to be our true identity, if we think our mask is our true face, we will protect it with fabrications even at the cost of violat-

ing our own truth. This seems to be the collective endeavor of society: the more busily men [and women] dedicate themselves to it, the more certainly it becomes a collective illusion, until in the end we have the enormous, obsessive, uncontrollable dynamic of fabrications designed to protect mere fictitious identities — "selves," that is to say, regarded as objects. Selves that can stand back and see themselves having fun (an illusion which reassures them that they are real)."

Merton diagnoses a problem that we all face: the temptation to mistake our masks for who we really are, and then defend those projections at all costs. The harm that comes at the personal level, to others and ourselves, increases dramatically the more responsibility we have in the family, community, nation, world and church. To what end do we protect our false selves?

The uniqueness of Trump in this regard isn't the existence of his false self, but the scale and the consequence of his construction, embrace and defense of it.

Perhaps he wouldn't lie so often if he could accept that who he really is doesn't depend on ratings and popularity. Perhaps he wouldn't exhibit such naked hatred of migrants and refugees if he could accept that who he really is doesn't depend on the perceived power that comes with stoking fear in his political base. Perhaps he wouldn't have caused so much financial ruin, particularly to those left unpaid by his repeated bankruptcies and failed enterprises, if he could accept that who he really is doesn't depend on claims to be an irrepressible financial genius and master of deal-making.

How different Trump's personal, professional and political life might be if he would only heed the wisdom St. Francis of Assisi once shared with his fellow friars: "Blessed is the servant who does not consider himself any better when he is praised and exalted by people than when he is considered worthless, simple, and looked down upon, for what a person is before God, that he is and no more."

This is advice that we could all use, because Trump is not the only one who struggles with the true and false selves. He just happens to be the biggest, loudest, brashest and most powerful example of that struggle today.

[Daniel P. Horan is a Franciscan friar and assistant professor of systematic theology and spirituality at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Follow him on Twitter: @DanHoranOFM.]

Confirming bias:

[By Matt Malone, S.J., *America Magazine*, 5/1/19]

Since last summer I have taken part in about a dozen panels and programs across this country that were organized to discuss the causes and consequences of the crisis of sexual abuse of minors by members of the Catholic clergy. I have visited several cities and met people from every walk of life—victims, survivors, bishops, priests and religious, lay leaders, moms and dads, young and old. It has been humbling, enlightening and inspiring to take part in these important conversations—the most important conversation we could ever have.

As you might imagine, there are recurring insights and themes. And not a few people have named what they believe to be the principal cause or causes of this catastrophic phenomenon. Even Benedict XVI, the pope emeritus, recently weighed in, arguing in an open letter that the cultural and sexual revolution of the 1960s created the conditions in which evils like sexual abuse could flourish. After 1968, he wrote, “there could no longer be anything that constituted an absolute good any more than anything fundamentally evil; there could be only relative value judgments.” The danger of relativism is not a new theme for Benedict. And I have expressed similar concerns about the loss of absolutes, often citing his insights about this phenomenon in this column.

But it is precisely this familiarity that troubles me. The cause of the greatest crisis facing the contemporary church just happens to be the very same thing about which Benedict has been concerned for his entire career? That seems suspicious, almost as if he might have had his answer before he had his question, the kind of inverted reasoning one usually finds in ideological and similarly circular forms of thought. Of course, even if such thinking is at work, it doesn’t necessarily follow that Benedict’s conclusion is wrong. But it does give me pause, all the more because I have discerned a similar pattern in the observations, commentaries and conclusions of many people in the U.S. church, some of whom are sympathetic to Benedict’s worldview and some of whom are not.

I have heard, for example, from a number of people who have been concerned for many years about homosexuality per se, or the presence of a large number of homosexuals among the Catholic clergy, that what caused the sexual abuse crisis in the church was homosexuality per se or the large number of homosexuals among the Catholic clergy. Similarly, I have heard from a number of people who have been concerned for many years about the lack of female ecclesiastical leaders that what caused the sexual abuse crisis in the church was the lack of female ecclesiastical leaders. I have also heard from people who have expressed deep concern over the years about the culture of clericalism in the church that what caused the sexual abuse crisis was the culture of clericalism in the church.

You see my point. There appears to be a kind of circular reasoning at work. Again, it does not follow that these conclusions are necessarily wrong. But if the cause of every major ecclesial scandal just happens to

be that thing that you hate and have railed against for years, then you should ask yourself whether your view may be biased.

Ideological bias structures much of the public discourse. That is a long-term menace, but on most days, it is mainly a nuisance. But we cannot allow it to structure our ecclesial conversation and we certainly cannot permit it to shape our thinking about a topic as fundamentally important as the causes and consequences of sexual abuse. Undoubtedly, the sexual abuse crisis in the church has causes and consequences that are specifically ecclesial and specifically Catholic. But prudence dictates that we avoid jumping to the conclusion that those causes and consequences are obvious or that they necessarily involve our usual suspects, whoever or whatever they might be.

It is also certain, however, that the sexual abuse crisis in the church has causes and consequences that are not specifically ecclesial or Catholic, and we should allow for the possibility that those factors might be even more decisive. If this were not true, the list of institutions facing sexual abuse crises—the federal government, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Boy Scouts, the Chicago public school system, the New England private school system—would not be growing daily.

Our search for the causes and consequences of these atrocious crimes must be fearless, exhaustive and without bias. Since we are dealing with sin, however, we must also bear in mind that the ultimate cause and consequence is beyond reason. For while some may say the cause is the sexual revolution and others might say the cause is clericalism, the third chapter of the Book of Genesis tells us that it is somehow neither and somehow both.

[Matt Malone, S.J., is President & Editor in Chief of America Media.]

Cardinal “fixed it”:

[By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service, 5/14/19]

..Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, 55-year-old Polish cardinal, holds the title of papal almoner, an ancient office devoted to mostly small, direct acts of almsgiving.

Twenty-four hours after returning to Rome from Greece, the cardinal went to a government building occupied by some 450 people, including close to 100 children. The power company had cut electricity to the building because no one was paying the bill. Cardinal Krajewski fixed it.

While he did not explicitly admit to climbing down a manhole to reconnect the power, he has taken full responsibility for overriding the electric company's decision to cut service to the building. And he knows it can have legal consequences.

The office of papal almoner has existed since early in the 13th century. While the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and Caritas Internationalis, along with its national partners, are responsible for large-scale development, relief and advocacy projects, the almoner's office is focused on person-to-person charity.

The direct contact with the poor is so important to the Catholic Church that the papal almoner is one of a handful of top Vatican positions that is not suspended when a pope dies.... #