



## Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 26, 2019

### Readings

*This week:*

Acts of the Apostles 15:1–2, 22–29

Revelation 21:10–14, 22–23

John 14:23–29

*Next week:*

Acts of the Apostles 1:1–11

Ephesians 1:17–23

Luke 24:46–53

### Psalm

O God, let all the nations praise you! (*Psalm 67*)

### Today

Today's presider is Fr. Russ Roide, 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 collection baskets passed during Mass (these are for parish contributions only).**

### Calendar

Friday, May 31, 7—8:30 p.m. STA Sing-a-Long, Thomas House

### From Thomas Merton

In humility is the greatest freedom. As long as you have to defend the imaginary self that you think is important, you lose your peace of heart. As soon as you compare that shadow with the shadows of other people, you lose all joy, because you have begun to trade in unrealities, and there is no joy in things that do not exist.

As soon as you begin to take yourself seriously and imagine that your virtues are important because they are yours, you become the prisoner of your own vanity, and even your best works will blind and deceive you. Then, in order to defend yourself, you will begin to see sins and faults everywhere in the actions of other men. And the more unreasonable importance you attach to yourself and to your works, the more you will tend to build up your own idea of yourself by condemning other people.

Sometimes virtuous men are also bitter and unhappy, because they have unconsciously come to believe that all their happiness depends on their being more virtuous than others

*--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*

## **International Thomas Merton Society 16th General Meeting at Santa Clara University June 27-30**

This biennial meeting carries out the mission of the ITMS to promote an understanding and appreciation of the multifaceted character of Thomas Merton and encourages study and research to make better known the unique contribution he has made to the literature of spirituality and to American literature and religious life.

This year's conference theme is "O Peace, bless this mad place," a line from a poem by Merton. Keynote speakers include Rose Marie Berger, Fr. Cyprian Consiglio, O.S.B. Cam., Robert Ellsberg, Ron Hansen, and Richard Rodriguez, a panel on Dan Berrigan, and many concurrent sessions on topics such as Merton and Racism, Merton and the Ignatian Tradition, Merton and Peace, Merton and Ecology. Sr. Kathleen Deignan, who has led several retreats for TMC in the past, will participate in a workshop, as will Morgan Atkinson, the filmmaker who has shown two of his films on Merton at TMC events.

Registration for the 3-day conference is open now at: **merton.org/2019**. Registration fee is \$350 for ITMS members (TMC is a member) or \$400 for non-members and includes 3 days of meetings and meals. If you wish to volunteer for registration at the conference (<http://bit.ly/ITMSVolunteers>), there is a reduced registration available. (There is no option for partial registration.) Several members of the TMC Spiritual Education Committee will be attending.

Contact Anna Jaklitsch with questions: [annajak14@yahoo.com](mailto:annajak14@yahoo.com) or 650-327-0978.

**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](mailto: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.

## **TMC donation envelope enclosed today:**



Please use the envelope enclosed in this bulletin to make your monthly contribution to the support of the Thomas Merton Center. Your dollars make possible the sponsorship of the 8:45 Sunday Mass, monthly contributions to Seton School (\$1,000) and the Ecumenical Hunger Program (\$40), spiritual education talks, retreats, and the publication of this bulletin. Lay-led, self-sustaining, self-generating—this is TMC. Thanks to all who contribute.

## ***I'm an anti-abortion Christian. But Alabama's ban will do more harm than good.***

[By [Katherine Kelaidis](#), Vox First Person, May 17, 2019]

I am an anti-abortion Christian. My views might lead those who voted to ban nearly all abortions in Alabama, and now Missouri, to think I am cheering on their actions. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In fact, the news coming out of Georgia and Alabama — as well as Ohio and other states — that lawmakers continue to pass increasingly restrictive abortion bans has made me angry in a way I cannot remember being in a long time. These laws, which are aimed at challenging *Roe v. Wade*, serve as a sickening reminder of the ways much of what I hold most sacred has been weaponized by the forces of the American religious right.

First, the obvious: Laws that restrict access to abortion are not an effective way to end or greatly reduce the number of abortions because people will continue to have abortions regardless of the law. We actually know how to reduce the number of abortions. Most of those ways involve being honest about how and when people have sex and giving people the information they need to have sex responsibly.

Yet most who favor these highly restrictive laws do not seem terribly interested in pursuing policies that would do any of these things. Every state that has passed a restrictive law around abortion in recent weeks [requires that sex](#)

**TMC Board:** Gerard McGuire, [gerardmc@aol.com](mailto:gerardmc@aol.com), 650-814-2223

**Bulletin:** Kay Williams, [kaywill@pacbell.net](mailto:kaywill@pacbell.net); Bob Capriles, [bob\\_capriles2002@yahoo.com](mailto:bob_capriles2002@yahoo.com) and Margaret Capriles, [capriles.m@gmail.com](mailto:capriles.m@gmail.com)

**Finance:** Helena Wee, 650-323-7987, [shhwee@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shhwee@sbcglobal.net)

**Hospitality:** Jim Davis, 328-2584

**Liturgy:** John Arnold, 325-1421, [jsaoso@comcast.net](mailto:jsaoso@comcast.net)  
Sally Benson, 408-972-5843, [sallymbenson@gmail.com](mailto:sallymbenson@gmail.com)

**Membership:** Kay Williams, 650-270-4188, [kaywill@pacbell.net](mailto:kaywill@pacbell.net)

**Needs Net:** Roberta Kehret, 650-494-1488, [robkehr@yahoo.com](mailto:robkehr@yahoo.com)

**Adult Education:** Jim Davis, 650-704-8002, [Jim\\_Davis@pacbell.net](mailto:Jim_Davis@pacbell.net)  
Mary Coady, 650-261-9155, [coady\\_94025@yahoo.com](mailto:coady_94025@yahoo.com)

**SpeakOut:** Diana Diamond, 650-323-4787, [dianaldiamond@gmail.com](mailto:dianaldiamond@gmail.com)

# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

[education “stress” abstinence](#). Neither Alabama nor Missouri mandates sex education, though when it is taught, both states require that it emphasize the importance of “sex only within marriage.” Georgia, which does mandate sex education, does not require that information about contraception be included.

This simple fact suggests to me, when I am in a less generous mood, that they are not concerned about preventing abortions. They are instead interested in enforcing their own reactionary views with regard to women and sex.

I believe that abortion always ends a unique, irreplaceable human life. I also understand, of course, that there is a multitude of circumstances in which the moral calculus is not easy. But I want a world in which unintended pregnancies are exceedingly rare and in which no one is the victim of rape or incest. Lawmakers in Alabama and Georgia do not seem to want to work toward these goals.

If laws like those recently passed in Alabama and Georgia succeed, they will not bring an end to abortion. Instead, they will punish the most marginalized and the most vulnerable. Low-income people, women of color, and victims of rape and incest are among those most likely to be harmed. These are the very people that my Christian faith demands I protect.

And using abortion policy as a covert means by which to dictate the sexual behavior of another person strikes me as a deeply un-Christian act. Claiming that you are defending the innocent when in fact you are trying to find a way to enforce highly debatable standards of “purity” runs counter to everything I understand about the message of Jesus. At the heart of that message, after all, is the central demand that we love God and others and that we act to protect and serve the most marginalized people in our society. And it is in this that these laws truly fall short.

Draconian bans on abortion — and frankly anything other than liberal access to abortions along with comprehensive sex education and access to contraception — fail to protect human life, both in the womb and outside of it. This, in itself, should be intolerable to any Christian, particularly one who views abortion as morally suspect.

Every human being is made in the image of God. For this reason, I cannot compel the actions of others with respect to their bodies and lives. I cannot tell them when to have sex or when to have children. I cannot tell another woman what to do when she finds herself pregnant after a rape or pregnant with cancer or pregnant without a paycheck.

I can only work to create a world in which people are truly making decisions without fear or coercion. Nothing about these terrible laws does any of that.

That is why, now more than ever, it is imperative that people of faith, particularly those for whom their faith compels them to adopt an anti-abortion position, speak up against these draconian measures. These laws are not a pro-life or Christian response to abortion. They are entirely the opposite.

*[Katherine Kelaidis is a writer and scholar whose work focuses on the intersection of religion and politics. Find her on Twitter at [@katiekelaidis](#)]*

## ***The Play Deficit***

[An Excerpt By Peter Gray Aeon September 18, 2013]

When I was a child in the 1950s, my friends and I had two educations. We had school (which was not the big deal it is today), and we also had what I call a hunter-gather education. We played in mixed-age neighbourhood groups almost every day after school, often until dark. We played all weekend and all summer long. We had time to explore in all sorts of ways, and also time to become bored and figure out how to overcome boredom, time to get into trouble and find our way out of it, time to daydream, time to immerse ourselves in hobbies, and time to read comics and whatever else we wanted to read rather than the books assigned to us. What I learnt in my hunter-gatherer education has been far more valuable to my adult life than what I learnt in school, and I think others in my age group would say the same if they took time to think about it.

For more than 50 years now, we in the United States have been gradually reducing children’s opportunities to play, and the same is true in many other countries. In his book *Children at Play: An American History* (2007), Howard Chudacoff refers to the first half of the 20th century as the ‘golden age’ of children’s free play. By about 1900, the need for child labour had declined, so children had a good deal of free time. But then, beginning around 1960 or a little before, adults began chipping away at that freedom by increasing the time that children had to spend at schoolwork and, even more significantly, by reducing children’s freedom to play on their own, even when they were out of school and not doing homework. Adult-directed sports for children began to replace ‘pickup’ games; adult-directed classes out of school began to re-

place hobbies; and parents' fears led them, ever more, to forbid children from going out to play with other kids, away from home, unsupervised. There are lots of reasons for these changes but the effect, over the decades, has been a continuous and ultimately dramatic decline in children's opportunities to play and explore in their own chosen ways.

Over the same decades that children's play has been declining, childhood mental disorders have been increasing. It's not just that we're seeing disorders that we overlooked before. Clinical questionnaires aimed at assessing anxiety and depression, for example, have been given in unchanged form to normative groups of schoolchildren in the US ever since the 1950s. Analyses of the results reveal a continuous, essentially linear, increase in anxiety and depression in young people over the decades, such that the rates of what today would be diagnosed as generalised anxiety disorder and major depression are five to eight times what they were in the 1950s. Over the same period, the suicide rate for young people aged 15 to 24 has more than doubled, and that for children under age 15 has quadrupled.

The decline in opportunity to play has also been accompanied by a decline in empathy and a rise in narcissism, both of which have been assessed since the late 1970s with standard questionnaires given to normative samples of college students. Empathy refers to the ability and tendency to see from another person's point of view and experience what that person experiences. Narcissism refers to inflated self-regard, coupled with a lack of concern for others and an inability to connect emotionally with others. A decline of empathy and a rise in narcissism are exactly what we would expect to see in children who have little opportunity to play socially. Children can't learn these social skills and values in school, because school is an authoritarian, not a democratic setting. School fosters competition, not co-operation; and children there are not free to quit when others fail to respect their needs and wishes. . . .

I recently took part in a radio debate with a woman representing an organisation called the National Center on Time and Learning, which campaigns for a longer school day and school year for schoolchildren in the US (a recording of the debate can be found [here](#)). Her thesis — consistent with her organisation's purpose and the urgings of President Barack Obama and the Education Secretary Arne Duncan — was that children need more time in school than currently required, to prepare them for today's and tomorrow's competitive world. I argued the

opposite. The host introduced the debate with the words: 'Do students need more time to learn, or do students need more time to play?'

Learning versus playing. That dichotomy seems natural to people such as my radio host, my debate opponent, my President, my Education Secretary — and maybe you. Learning, according to that almost automatic view, is what children do in school and, maybe, in other adult-directed activities. Playing is, at best, a refreshing break from learning. From that view, summer vacation is just a long recess, perhaps longer than necessary. But here's an alternative view, which should be obvious but apparently is not: playing is learning. At play, children learn the most important of life's lessons, the ones that cannot be taught in school. To learn these lessons well, children need lots of play — lots and lots of it, without interference from adults....

In another branch of my research I've studied how children learn at a radically alternative school, the Sudbury Valley School, not far from my home in Massachusetts. It's called a school, but is as different from what we normally think of as 'school' as you can imagine. The students — who range in age from four to about 19 — are free all day to do whatever they want, as long as they don't break any of the school rules. The rules have nothing to do with learning; they have to do with keeping peace and order.

To most people, this sounds crazy. How can they learn anything? Yet, the school has been in existence for 45 years now and has many hundreds of graduates, who are doing just fine in the real world, not because their school taught them anything, but because it allowed them to learn whatever they wanted. . . . what children in our culture want to learn when they are free turns out to be skills that are valued in our culture and that lead to good jobs and satisfying lives. When they play, these students learn to read, calculate, and use computers with the same playful passion with which hunter-gatherer kids learn to hunt and gather. They don't necessarily think of themselves as learning. They think of themselves as just playing, or 'doing things', but in the process they *are* learning. . . .

Peter Gray is a psychologist and research professor at Boston College. He writes the Freedom to Learn blog, and is the author of *Free to Learn* (2013) and *Psychology* (2011).