



Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 30, 2019

Readings

This week:

1 Kings 19:16b, 19–21

Galatians 5:1, 13–18

Luke 9:51–62

Next week:

Isaiah 66:10–14

Galatians 6:14–18

Luke 10:1–12, 17–20

Psalm

You are my inheritance, O Lord.

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

No Scheduled Events this week

From
Thomas
Merton

Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy. That is not our business and, in fact, it is nobody's business. What we are asked to do is to love, and this love itself will render both ourselves and our neighbors worthy.

~ *The Power and Meaning of Love*

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

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.

Memorial for Tom Williams

There will be a funeral Mass for Tom celebrated Saturday, July 6, at 10:00 a.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 751 Waverley Street, Palo Alto, CA.

Fr. Larry Percell will be the presider.

Let There Be Light

Continued from last week

[By Jenna Barnett, Sojourners (sojo.net) - July 2019]

A changed congregation

Since my conversations with Hankel and Tchividjian, I've been wondering what it would look like for the church to fully repent of our sins of abuse. Following the model of Bethesda Presbyterian, it might look like a continued and transparent unearthing of the violence that has already happened in our sacred spaces. We will need to lament and confess while simultaneously working to better ourselves and our protocols to diminish the frequency of this type of violence.

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 Thomas House for coffee and donuts. We especially encourage newcomers or those passing through town to stop by for food and fellowship.

It will require prioritizing those who have been victimized, while ministering to both survivors and perpetrators. Hankel explained to me that ministering to survivors means listening to and believing them. Ministering to perpetrators must be done carefully. Faith leaders can help them see and acknowledge the truth of their sin and its impact. "It is a merciful and graceful and loving step to separate the perpetrator from the thing by which they are enticed," Hankel said, insisting that ministry to someone who has committed violence against women or children should be done by men and away from the site of the abuse. "We don't put alcoholics in a bar to do ministry. We don't put perpetrators around the thing that entices them."

Full redemption would also look like every seminary training their students how to respond to sexual and domestic violence. The 2018 Broken Silence 2.0 Survey, commissioned by IMA World Health and Sojourners on behalf of the We Will Speak Out coalition, revealed that even though 90 percent of pastors encounter domestic or sexual violence situations through their ministry, only 50 percent feel equipped to respond well. Now that #ChurchToo has shown us the pervasiveness of this violence, said Hankel, churches cannot "just wing it. And you can't just say 'This won't happen to us.'"

After Hankel told her congregation about the abuse that happened in their church, members responded in various ways. Some didn't want to believe that the deacon they respected could be capable of this darkness. Others opened up to Hankel for the first time about the violence they endured in their lifetimes. And the church changed. They have become "more protective and caring," she said, "a center for hope and healing."

Once you see the scriptures through a lens of abuse, Hankel told me, you can't unsee it. This lens makes us cautious to use biblical phrases such as "turn the other cheek" and further complicates traditionally venerated biblical figures—even the "great King David."

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

Moving Beyond Pro-Life and Pro-Choice

[By Jacqui Lewis , Sojourners (sojo.net) - June 10, 2019]

As a Christian clergy who celebrates all the spiritual paths that lead to Love; as a woman who was unable to conceive and who grieved for years; as an aunt and grandmother who thinks children are precious, I resonate with the feelings of those who identify as pro-choice *and* pro-life.

There is more than one religion practiced in this nation, and no religious point of view — not even my own faith, Christianity — should guide our legal processes. In fact, Jesus, who is the mentor for my faith, healed a woman suffering with a reproductive issue — a hemorrhaging womb of 12 years. His model of compassion and love for those on the margins and those needing healing and health care drives my commitment to health care for all, and my understanding of the pro-choice ideals.

As our nation, once again, debates reproductive freedom and abortion, I know from my experience counseling women and families that the decision to have an abortion is a deeply personal and agonizing one. But I believe this choice should be legally and safely available to those who need to make it.

From my point of view, pro-choice means if pregnant, I can choose to abort a pregnancy that endangers my life. I can terminate a pregnancy that results from rape or incest.

It also means I can take a pregnancy to term and raise a child inside a partnership or as a single parent. I can be a trans man and choose to be the partner who gets pregnant. I can use a donor or a surrogate to have a child. I can give birth and place my child in an open or closed adoption.

I am for people making these choices guided by ethics. I am for the agency of women, who are the majority of those bearing children or deciding not to. I am pro-safe, legal, affordable, and rare abortions.

I also resonate with the convictions of those who identify as pro-life. I am for the lives and agency of women around the globe. I trust they know that abortion is a moral issue and they make this decision in conversation with partners and family and Spirit. I am for the lives of children who should have clean water and enough food and health care and books and supplies for a good education. I am for getting guns off the street so children can live without fear. I am pro-life and anti-guns and anti-mass

shootings in movie theaters, mosques, temples, gurdwaras, churches, nightclubs, concert venues, and on urban streets.

I am for the lives of my LGBTQ family, and especially the lives of trans women of color who are brutalized for being brown and trans. I am pro-Black Lives Matter and pro human lives and immigrant lives. I am for the lives of asylum seekers and those who are incarcerated and who should be treated with dignity. I am pro- the life of the earth and the lives of creatures.

In this political climate, as more and more civil rights are under threat, this particular right — the right to choose an abortion — is loaded with political and theological meaning. Still, as a woman who yearned for and adores children, and as a clergy who deeply values human life, I urge us to see beyond the binaries of pro-choice and pro-life and toward a deeper conversation.

The Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis is Senior Minister of Middle Collegiate Church in the East Village of New York City.

Let There Be Light

Continued from page 2

[By Jenna Barnett , Sojourners (sojo.net) - July 2019]

When we preach or write or offer counsel, this lens prompts us to ask ourselves, *Would these words be healing and empowering to a person facing violence?* And this lens changes the way we see Jesus: publicly abused, but wholly liberated. And if this is how we see Christianity's central figure, how might we re-center the vulnerable at every level of the church?

Jenna Barnett is an Associate Web Editor for Sojourners.

What Our Legislators Need To Do To Break The Pattern of Mass Shootings

[By Matt Malone S. J. America Magazine June 14, 2019]

Again, the bullet. Again, the agony. On May 3, a disgruntled city employee opened fire in a municipal building in Virginia Beach, Va., killing 12 people and sending terrified co-workers running for their lives. This was the 10th mass shooting of 2019 (the F.B.I. defines a “mass shooting” as an incident in which four or more people, not including the suspect, are killed).

How did Americans react? In a word, predictably. As I followed the coverage, I felt something like the main character in “Groundhog Day,” the 1993 film in which Bill Murray plays a weatherman who gets trapped in a time loop and must live the same day over and over again—Groundhog Day in Punxsutawney, Pa. In the film, the effect of repetition is comic. In the real world—Virginia Beach and elsewhere—it is not.

Yet we are repeating the same day over and over. It begins when the news breaks: The drama unfolds live in a terrifying, chyron-ed frenzy on national television, as an army of law enforcers, dressed as for the Battle of Iwo Jima, surrounds the building. Word usually comes that the shooter has been killed or has killed himself. Community leaders, their faces contorted by confusion and horror, then make statements. The usual opinions are offered, none of them new, few of them helpful. Someone demands that SOMETHING MUST BE DONE. Nothing is done. Most of us, exhausted by the whole ghastly spectacle and almost pathologically pessimistic about the prospects for any change, turn our attention elsewhere. Until the next time.

In the movie, Bill Murray’s character is the only one who knows that they are living through the same event day after day. In real life, on the other hand, most of us recognize the pattern I just described. But if we can recognize it, why can’t we stop it? One reason is the influence of groups like the National Rifle Association. Don’t get me wrong. Most members of the N.R.A. are law-abiding, decent, responsible citizens. My father is one of them.

But the N.R.A. leadership exercises a hugely disproportionate level of influence over national gun policy. Through its powerful lobby and congressional campaign donations, pro-gun organizations like the N.R.A. have a virtual veto over any firearms legislation. And the gun lobby it leads opposes almost every reform, however modest.

In this way, the N.R.A. is not unlike the pro-abortion lobby, which similarly opposes even minimal restrictions on abortion services—a strategy driven by their fears of a slippery slope. And like the pro-abortion lobby, the

N.R.A. leadership is demonstrably out of step with the majority of Americans, who, in poll after poll, say they favor reasonable restrictions on both abortion services and the manufacture and sale of firearms.

In both of these areas of public policy, then, the political process is controlled by a powerful minority of Americans. Yet prescinding from the merits of this or that reform, surely the vast majority of us who constitute the vast majority of Americans should be able to see that in neither case is this disproportionate influence a healthy thing for our democracy.

How do we break the pattern? First, we need legislators who recognize the problem and are willing to buck the special interests by advocating for sensible solutions most Americans would favor. It would also help if we rightsized the influence of lobbyists and campaign donations. To that end, politicians should consider some version of an idea that Peggy Noonan proposed last year in *The Wall Street Journal* (2/15/18).

What if Democratic members of Congress agreed to stop accepting campaign contributions from the pro-abortion lobby if Republican members of Congress agreed to stop accepting money from the pro-gun lobby? They would take this step simply in the interests of democracy, to create a space in which sensible reforms supported by a majority of voters could at least be considered. Neither side would necessarily have to change its position on these issues, but such an arrangement would at least give both sides greater freedom to negotiate. It would also send a signal that, while disagreeing about some things, our political leaders can still agree about at least one thing: that the health of our democracy is more important than gaining partisan advantage.

In the end, of course, it is up to us, the voters, to hold these men and women accountable. Our failure to do so is literally a matter of life and death. But it would help a lot if the partisans on both sides decided to break the loop by doing something bold, something different. But to do that, they need to stop living in fear of their own shadows.

Matt Malone, S.J., is the President and Editor in Chief of America Media.

The Last Word

Our lives begin *to end the day we become* silent *about things that matter.*

- *Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.*