



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 7, 2019

Readings

This week:

Isaiah 66:10–14

Galatians 6:14–18

Luke 10:1–12, 17–20

Next week:

Deuteronomy 30:10–14

Colossians 1:15–20

Luke 10:25–37

Psalm

Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

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

Monday, July 7, 7:00 Liturgy Planning Meeting, Thomas House

Thursday, July 11, 7:30 Monthly Board Meeting, Thomas House

From
Thomas
Merton

The beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves, the resolution not to twist them to fit our own image. If in loving them we do not love what they are, but only their potential likeness to ourselves, then we do not love them: we only love the reflection of ourselves we find in them.

~No Man Is an Island

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

A Theology for July 4

[By Jim Wallis, Sojourners (sojo.net) - July 3, 2019]

It didn't start well — this American nation conceived in America's original sin of racial dehumanization through Indigenous land theft and the slavery of Africans. Yet, many of the ideals that the nation's founders aspired to still hold the potential to build a future nation much better than the one we began with. And that has been the struggle ever since.

I remember a story from South Africa, deep in the heart of apartheid, decades ago. I was there for many weeks building the relationship between the South African and the American churches working together to end the apartheid system. I was mostly staying with friends in black townships for behind-the-scenes, private meetings after having been snuck into the country. One night, I was staying in the Soweto home of Frank Chikane, then president of the South African Council of Churches, and a recently honored "elder" at the Sojourners leadership Summit (where we had precious times of remembering our past together but, most importantly, looking ahead).

"I want to show you something," Frank said to me. He and a few others had been asked by Nelson Mandela (while he was still in prison) to start writing a new constitution for a new South Africa. On his Formica-topped kitchen table, he began to roll out some documents with his own notes. Two of them were the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Both of us were deeply aware of the flaws in those documents (slavery was in the Constitution) and the horrible hypocrisies of the white American practice of those documents. Nevertheless, there they were on his table, as resources to help

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.

inspire the new South African constitution, which ultimately became one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. "Our constitution turned out better than yours!" he reminded me last week. But those ideals, which we formally celebrate this July 4th holiday, have provided over the years, partial and flawed inspiration for other nations stumbling toward democracy and human rights.

Then Frank pointed outside his kitchen window: "See those Casspirs (a South African military vehicle)? One of them is for me and is out there every night to make sure I know they are watching; and the other one is for you, now that they know you are in the country." The irony was complete. The United States government was still supporting the South African apartheid regime through a policy called "constructive engagement," and likely helping to pay for those big tank-like weapons outside of Frank's house. And there we were discussing a new South African constitution with the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution on his table. Ideas inspire.

So, what is this coming July 4: a celebration of traditional patriotism *or* America first nationalism? Donald Trump seems to be planning for the second. But is there a difference between the two?

First, let's do some theology for July 4. For Christians, our nations are never first. God is, the body of Christ as the international church is, and our faith is. When I once spoke to a conservative evangelical conference in Washington, D.C., I told the crowd, "We are Christians first and Americans second! We all agree with that right?" It was clear the audience did not; they were grimacing and clearly preferred it be the other way around.

I'll be clear: All allegiances are always secondary to our allegiance to God. If Jesus is Lord, as the early Christians said when they knew it was a political statement, Caesar is not. And no nation is above other nations in God's eyes. All nations are under the judgement of God and are to be held to God's standards for nations. Those standards emphatically insist the biblical test of all kings and rulers is how they treat the poorest and most vulnerable.

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COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

The Christian nationalism we have seen in this country over many years — and that is being revived now in the Trump era — is nothing short of a theological heresy. “God Bless America” is not found in the Bible, could be a prayer offered for every nation, and can never imply that God will bless America over other nations.

I read up on the history of this, and while some presidents have given speeches or receptions on Fourth of July holidays in various venues (Eisenhower just played golf), none has ever given a speech at the center of the celebration. The rationale is to keep this a “peoples” holiday and not a presidential one. No former president has ever tried to turn the Fourth of July celebration into a partisan or personal event. But as we’ve heard it said almost every day, the current president is “unprecedented.” Perhaps it’s time to find a new word that goes deeper into what his presidency threatens for a different American future. Trump has invited all his supporters to come to hear him speak at the Lincoln Memorial at the center of the show he is putting on this week. Will this be a non-political speech? Is Trump even capable of that, or will he attack the opposing party, their candidates, and the press, as his political rallies always do? And, like other “strongmen” who want to live like autocrats, Donald Trump is finally getting his militarized parade, bringing “best fighter jets in the world” to fly over his spectacle along with M1 Abrams tanks officials hope won’t break down the Lincoln Memorial foundations or crush the streets. Will there be tanks on the Memorial Bridge?

My family smiles at me when I start to tear up during the singing of “Edelweiss” during *The Sound of Music*, as Captain von Trapp describes the beauty of his homeland — and I still get fired up by Woody Guthrie’s “This Land is Your Land.” But nationalism is not just a love for country; rather, it pits the power of one nation against others, often with ideologies of racial superiority, and has led to the worst violence in human history. There is no Christian nationalism; nationalism is unchristian, and the kind that is militarized by wannabe strongmen like Donald Trump is the worst of all.

So, Sojourners readers, don’t celebrate American nationalism this week. Find ways to love your family and your neighbors and your country — and remember the values and ideals that this nation has, at its best, rightly aspired to and have even inspired others around the world.

Jim Wallis is president of Sojourners. His new Audible spoken-word series, [Jim Wallis In Conversation](#), is available now, as is his book, [America’s Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America](#). Follow Jim on Twitter [@JimWallis](#).

Who’s Most at Risk

When the Census Is Politicized

[An Excerpt by Adam R. Taylor ,
Sojourners (sojo.net) - June 27, 2019]

The right to be counted is at the foundation of our faith and our democracy. In Matthew 18:12–14) and Luke (15:3–7) Jesus tells the iconic parable about the lost sheep. A man, who owns 100 sheep, goes to great lengths to find one missing sheep out of the 100 and when he finally recovers the lost sheep, he is happier about the one sheep that is found than the 99 who are safe. The parable speaks volumes about the degree to which God shows a particular concern and attention around anyone who is lost or falls in harm way. In a similar vein, we should be alarmed and equally committed when one person is miscounted or disregarded in our society. Our democracy loses its integrity and legitimacy when people and communities are made invisible and further marginalized by undercounting in the census.

The question of who is counted and valued has been a highly contested one that has haunted American history. From the three-fifths compromise to a series of painful and exclusionary immigration laws that have dehumanized and excluded women, Catholics, and Chinese-Americans, to name just a few, from being fully counted and exercising their rights.

2020 is of paramount importance because it is both an election year and a census year. Under the Constitution, the population count is used to determine the number seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and how many electoral votes each of the 50 states will have for the following decade. Census population numbers also are used to draw congressional district lines and are also used to draw state and local voting districts. In addition to providing the basis for fair voting representation, census data plays a key role in the implementation and enforcement of the nation’s civil rights laws and influences the allocation of more than \$600 billion in federal government resources that goes to states, localities, and families every year, including federal funding for health care, education, housing, food and income security, rural access to broadband, and other vital services. The census also guides private-sector investment decisions on where to invest in job creation, new facilities, and marketing.

Counting every person in the United States is a massive and complex undertaking even under the best conditions. Ensuring a fair, inclusive, and accurate count requires careful planning, continual updating of address information, advance testing of procedures and technology, and the hiring, training, and oversight of a large temporary workforce to gather and process the data.

Sadly, some groups of people have historically proven to be challenging to count accurately, particularly people of color, urban and rural low-income households, and young children. The Census Bureau classifies these communities, as well as immigrant, limited-English proficient, and single-parent households, as “hard-to-count.” Accurately enumerating these communities takes a focused effort.

For example, the African-American population has been historically undercounted in the decennial census, disadvantaging their families, communities, and neighborhoods. In fact the 2010 Census undercounted the African-American population by more than 800,000 and approximately 7 percent of young African-American children were overlooked by the 2010 Census, roughly twice the rate for young non-Hispanic white children.

All Americans have a stake in fair political representation and in the effective use of tax dollars to meet community and national needs. But those with the most to lose – people who are members of disadvantaged or marginalized communities – are at greatest risk of being uncoun­ted. As a result, their communities will not receive the political influence and resources they deserve and need.

Unfortunately the importance of the census can easily escape our attention, in part because it only takes place every 10 years and is often treated as purely bureaucratic process. However, the census has become increasingly politicized and now carries long-lasting and even life-and-death consequences for whole communities and groups.

And we need to pay attention, particularly because the census is treacherously off track. Census officials and immigration advocates have voiced deep concerns about the failure to engage citizens without internet access, as well as the underfunding of census workers and offices. The Census Bureau plans to halve the number of its local offices across the country and reduce the number of enumerators — workers who follow up with people who don’t respond to census requests.

To make matters worse, the Trump administration wants to add a question to the 2020 Census asking respondents whether or not they are U.S. citizens for the first time in the nation’s history. While the Supreme Court today at least temporarily prevented this, the administration may still push to get the question in. There are some very basic reasons why this is a terrible and sinister idea from a practical perspective, a justice perspective, and a moral perspective. First, the census’ mandate isn’t to count how many citizens there are, it’s to count how many people — of *all* nationalities and immigration statuses — currently live in the United States. The administration has disingenuously argued that it’s seeking this data in order to help it enforce the Voting Rights Act, which is absurd on its face and is further belied by evidence that recently came to light that the Voting Rights Act argument is merely a pretext. It’s on this basis the Court rejected it. The long-suspected true motivation was seemingly confirmed by the writings of a prominent architect of adding the citizenship question, who argued that this question would be “advantageous to Republicans and non-Hispanic whites,” as he put it. In other words the addition of the question would further institutionalize and advantage white power and voters.

There is immense concern that communities with high immigrant populations — which already tend to be under-served by the government — will suffer from widespread undercounting in the upcoming census, and that this would be significantly exacerbated by the presence of a citizenship question. Families containing undocumented people, who may already be justifiably wary of providing information to the federal government, would be even less likely to participate in a census in which they are explicitly asked whether or not they are citizens.

Unfortunately, the damage has already been done, despite the Supreme Court’s decision today. As professor and expert on demographic history Margo Anderson told FiveThirtyEight, “Regardless of how the case turns out, some damage to the census’s credibility as a nonpartisan, scientific tally may already have been done. [B]y drawing the census into the broader debate about immigration, the Trump administration may have already helped stoke mistrust in the final result — even if the citizenship question never ends up on a census form.” . . .

Rev. Adam R. Taylor is executive director of Sojourners. He previously led the Faith Initiative at the World Bank Group.