



24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 15, 2019

Readings

This week:

Exodus 32:7–11, 13–14

1 Timothy 1:12–17

Luke 15:1–32

Next week:

Amos 8:4–7

1 Timothy 2:1–8

Luke 16:1–13

Psalm

I will rise and go to my father. (*Psalm 51*)

Today

Today's presider is Rev. 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

Monday, Sept. 16, 7:00 pm TMC Spiritual Education Committee, Thomas House

From Thomas Merton

Some people think it is enough to have one virtue, like kindness or broadmindedness or charity, and let everything else go. But if you are unselfish in one way and selfish in twenty-five other ways, your virtue will not do you much good. In fact, it will probably turn out to be nothing more than a twenty-sixth variety of the same selfishness, disguised as virtue.

Therefore, do not think that because you seem to have some good quality, all the evil in you can be excused or forgotten on that account alone.

--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

Catholic Media: a talk by Jim Purcell Sept. 28:

There is a growing awareness of the role of some Catholic media in the U.S. that is presenting a traditional, anti-Vatican II, anti-Francis image of the “true Catholic church.” In an effort to educate the TMC community about this development, the Spiritual Education Committee of the Merton Center is presenting the following talk:

Jim Purcell, Chairman of the Board
of the *National Catholic Reporter*
“The Landscape of Catholic Media Today.”
Saturday, September 28, at 3:00 p.m,
in the St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center,
1095 Channing Ave., Palo Alto.

Jim has a long resume of service to the Catholic Church, from priesthood in the 60s, through directing Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County in the 80s, membership in the Bishop’s Administrative Council in the San Jose Diocese, president of HOPE Rehabilitation Services, and VP of University Relations at Santa Clara University. He is currently retired and consults to non-profits in strategic planning and fundraising. He joined the board of the NCR in 2015 and became chairman last year.

Jim will bring his knowledge of the current Catholic media world to this discussion, based on his experience over many years with the communication of Catholic values and initiatives to the public. (As a footnote, Jim is the older brother of Larry Purcell, of the Catholic Worker House of Redwood City.)

Please join us for a stimulating educational discussion and guidance toward an action plan. A reception with wine and cheese will follow the discussion.

For information: contact Kay Williams, (650) 270-4188, kaywill@pacbell.net.

Kenyan craft fairs scheduled:

Margo McAuliffe has returned from her summer in Kenya and will be displaying handmade items on behalf of Kenya Help at two Kenyan craft fairs here at STA after the 8:45 Mass on Sunday, October 20, and December 15. Save the dates with an eye to your holiday gift needs, which directly benefit scholarships for Kenyan youth.

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.

Global Climate Strike March/Rally Sept.20:

Join citizens around the world in the September Climate Strike by marching and rallying in Palo Alto:

When: Friday, September 20 @ 06:00 pm - 08:00pm

Where: King Plaza (in front of PA City Hall)
250 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto, CA

The planet, and the future generations of all living species depend on us making a change NOW! Let us make our voices heard and demand a change to the status quo which has slowly (now more rapidly) been killing this beautiful planet and the creatures living on it.

Sponsored by Peninsula Peace & Justice Center and co-sponsored by Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice, Greenbelt Alliance, Green Party of Santa Clara County, Acterra, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, along with others.

Volunteers are needed for traffic control, stage/sound system management, water distribution, photography/videography, and press aide.

Contact the Peace and Justice Center at (650) 326-8837, ppjc@peaceandjustice.org.

Altar furniture to be dedicated today at 10:30:

Bishop Oscar Cantú of the Diocese of San Jose will celebrate the 10:30 Mass at STA on September 15 and will dedicate the new altar during the Mass. There is a special blessing and ritual when a new altar is installed in a Catholic church.

Parishioner and master craftsman Jan Dedek built the new altar furniture, donating his skill and time to this holy project.

Parish Potluck Picnic today at OLR:

On September 15, if you stay on to attend the 10:30 Mass and get to know Bishop Cantú a bit, make it a day and continue over to Our Lady of the Rosary at 3233 Cowper St., Palo Alto, to join the annual parish potluck and picnic.

The Knights of Columbus will be flipping burgers (beef and veggie) and hotdogs on the grill. The Freecycle table may hold some treasures and you can bring some of your own to give away. Music and dance performances will keep you entertained, and you can get to know parishioners from the other two Palo Alto churches in a friendly and welcoming setting. There’s one requirement: the potluck happens because those with last names from A-P are bringing salad or side dish for 8, and Q-Z get to indulge their dessert craving. You need lunch anyhow, so come to OLR from 11:15 till 2:00 p.m. today!

COMMUNITY FORUM

Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns

CROP Hunger Walk Oct. 20 in Menlo Park:

A St. Thomas Aquinas Parish team has been created to support the CROP HUNGER WALK at Nealon Park, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Walk with us, make a donation or both! Festivities begin at 1 pm; walks start at 2 pm. Walkers may choose a .6-mile, 1, 3 or 5-mile walk and enjoy a live band, food, and personal testimonies. Thanks to our parishioners who contributed a total of \$1,085 in 2018 and several parishioners who walked.

CROP Hunger Walk helps to provide food and water, as well as resources that empower people to meet their own needs. From seeds and tools, to wells and water systems, to technical training and micro-enterprise loans, the key is people working together to identify their own development priorities, their strengths and their needs in partnership around the world.

CROP Hunger Walk is sponsored by Church World Service, a cooperative ministry of 37 Christian denominations. Over 5 million walkers have participated in more than 36,000 CROP Hunger Walks in the last two decades alone. This ecumenical effort helps children and families in need to have food for today, while building for a better tomorrow. CROP Hunger Walkers, volunteers, and sponsors put their caring into action, raising funds to help end hunger and poverty at home in the US and around the world.

An important note: 25% of funds raised locally will be contributed to the Ecumenical Hunger Program in East Palo Alto for distribution to the needy in our local community.

For information, to register and donate, check the Crop Hunger Walk at <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/menloparkca> or contact our parish Human Concerns Committee at 650-714-2131.

TMC Board: Gerard McGuire, gerardmc@aol.com, 650-814-2223
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PRAY FOR US: Please remember in your prayers this week Denise Alongi, Rudy Bahr, George Bouchev, 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, and T. J. Wooten.
[Add/subtract names by e-mailing Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net.]

A lesson in aging:

[By Oblate Fr. Ron Rolheiser, President, Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, TX]

We live in a culture that idealizes youth and marginalizes the old...

For most of my life, I've been able to think of myself as young. Because I was born late in the year, October, I was always younger than most of my classmates, graduated from high school at age seventeen, entered the seminary at that tender age, was ordained to the priesthood at age 25, did an advanced degree within the next year, and was teaching graduate theology at age 26, the youngest member on the faculty. ...

Moreover, for most of those years, I tried to stay young too in soul, staying on top of what was shaping youth culture, its movies, its popular songs, its lingo. During my years in seminary and for a good number of years after ordination, I was involved in youth ministry, helping give youth retreats in various high schools and colleges...

But nature offers no exemptions. Nobody stays young forever... [T]hat day comes round for everyone when you're surprised, stunned, that what you are seeing in the mirror is so different from how you have been imagining yourself and you ask yourself: "Is this really me? Am I this old person? Is this what I look like?" ...

[Y]ou have accept that you're no longer young in the world's eyes – nor in your own. Moreover gravity doesn't just affect your body, pulling things downward, so too for the soul. It's pulled downward along with the body, though aging means something very different here. The soul doesn't age, it matures. You can stay young in soul long after the body betrays you. Indeed we're meant to be always young in spirit. Souls carry life differently than do bodies because bodies are built eventually to die. Inside of every living body the life-principle has an exit strategy. It has no such strategy inside a soul, only a strategy to deepen, grow richer, and more textured. Aging forces us, mostly against our will, to listen to our soul more deeply and more honestly so as to draw from its deeper wells and begin to make peace with its complexity, its shadow, and its deepest proclivities – and the aging of the body plays the key role in this. To employ a metaphor from James Hillman: The best wines have to be aged in cracked old barrels. So too for the soul: The aging process is designed by God and nature to force the soul, whether it wants to or not, to delve ever deeper into the mystery of life, of community, of God, and of itself. Aging takes us to a deeper place, whether we want to go or not...

However I was particularly happy to celebrate my 70th birthday two years ago, not because I was happy to be that age, but because, after two serious bouts with cancer in recent years, I was very happy just to be alive and wise enough now to be a little grateful for what aging and a cancer diagnosis has taught me. There are certain secrets hidden from health, writes John Updike. True. And aging uncovers a lot of them ... #

Shepherd Francis in Africa:

[By Christopher Lamb, *The Tablet*, Sept. 12, 2019]

The huge crowds and the outpouring of joy that greeted the Pope in Mozambique, Madagascar and Mauritius not only confirmed that the centre of the Church has shifted away from Europe to the global South, but that his vision of a Church ‘of the poor for the poor’ is coming closer.

Three days after Pope Francis announced a new batch of cardinals, choices which embody his vision of a Church ready to leave its comfort zone and stand alongside the forgotten and marginalised, the 82-year-old Pontiff set off on a mission of his own.

Francis’ visit to Mozambique, Madagascar and Mauritius focussed on the core priorities of his pontificate, a “seamless garment” defence of the poorest and most vulnerable that embraces the protection of the planet. It was aimed at supporting three often forgotten “outsider” churches, in countries that he has chosen to be represented by cardinals during his pontificate.

In this papacy, the periphery has become the centre, and Francis’ visit saw him come face-to-face with the emerging Church, which he hopes will bring “missionary momentum” to the entire body of believers. The massive crowds, including huge numbers of young people, and the outpouring of joy that greeted Francis in all three countries confirmed that the axis has shifted in Catholicism, away from a Euro-centric Church to a global family of faith incorporating a vast array of cultural traditions. The life and energy of the youthful Church of sub-Saharan Africa contrasts with the sometimes grey and stiff Christian communities of the West, where much of the grumbling about this Pope takes place..

On board the plane to Mozambique, Francis told reporters it was an “honour” to be attacked by groups of wealthy, conservative Catholics from the United States. He is relaxed about being associated with a Gospel message which declares that the last shall be first. The closer the Pope comes to the Church of the poor, the further away he gets from the attacks of his well-funded opponents in their TV studios and conference halls. The forgotten, the powerless and the disadvantaged have become the protectors of his papacy. And he appears to be running out of patience with those trying to oppose him.

Instead, Francis seeks to unite himself more closely with the *sensus fidei* of ordinary Catholics on the ground. When the Pope said Mass in Antananarivo, Madagascar, one million people braved windswept dust to attend a liturgy described as the largest gathering in the country’s history. The visit brought a palpable sense of hope to a population that is desperately poor, and where 75 per cent live on less than two dollars a day. “As we look around us, how many men and women, young people and children are suffering and in utter need,” Francis said during his homily. “This is not part

of God’s plan.” He added: “We Christians cannot stand by with arms folded in indifference.”...

The Pope’s visit ... underscored the renewed diplomatic weight of the papacy under Francis. The first Pope from the global south has become one of its most powerful advocates, highlighting how the effects of deforestation and climate change affect the poorest communities. He spoke up for ethical, sustainable development, where land is fairly distributed and young people have access to jobs.

During his eight-hour visit to Mauritius, which has become an offshore tax haven, Francis urged the authorities to reject “the temptation of an idolatrous economic model” while he spoke out against the destruction of the natural habitat in Madagascar...

This was a visit where Francis underlined his adoption of “integral ecology”, which sees the world not as facing “two separate crises, one environmental and the other social” but rather “one complex crisis, which is both social and environmental”.

Earlier, in Mozambique, where the Catholic humanitarian group, the Sant’Egidio community, had helped to broker a peace agreement in 1992, Francis’ visit was recognised as consolidating the slow, difficult path from civil war towards peace. ...

This visit to Africa was full of lessons for the wider Church. Religious faith, Francis insists, can never be relegated to the private sphere, oblivious to the world around it. It must be open to the whole of creation, and at all times looking to bring the Gospel to others, to evangelise. He wants a Church that is ready to roll up its sleeves and get to work....

As usual, Francis offered some down-to-earth spiritual guidance. Speaking in an off the cuff reflection to Carmelite nuns in Madagascar, he urged them to change the world through “small acts of love”, describing St Thérèse of Lisieux as a “faithful friend” who now accompanies “an old man”. He also urged the nuns to be aware of “educated devils” who appear as a “noble, educated person, so often as a spiritual father”, adding, “Please, dear sisters, if you hear of something strange happening, tell someone immediately.” It was a thinly-coded warning of the potential abuse of nuns by priests.

Francis warned the Madagascan bishops to “not let the wolf into the flock” by allowing men with problematic pasts into seminaries. “In some European countries, a lack of vocations pushes the bishop to accept seminarians from here and there,” Francis said. “They accept those who have been thrown out of other seminaries or those who have been expelled from religious life for reasons of immorality.”

Francis has now visited eight African countries. His latest trip offered lessons and inspiration to the entire Church, and pointed to a very different future.... And, as the electrifying events of the past week and his bold choice of cardinals show, the trajectory is set to continue.

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